

Australian Garden HISTORY

Vol. 20 No. 4
April/May/June 2009

Darwin and Macleay
Leviny's dream villa
Hugh Linaker



Patrons

John and Lynne Landy

Executive Officer

Jackie Courmadias

Publication

Australian Garden History, the official journal of the Australian Garden History Society, is published four times a year.

Editors

Christina Dyson
 Richard Aitken
editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
 8 Eastern Place, Hawthorn East,
 Victoria, 3123

Enquiries

TollFree 1800 678 446

Phone 03 9650 5043

Fax 03 9650 8470

Email

info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Website

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Postal Address

AGHS, Gate Lodge
 100 Birdwood Avenue
 Melbourne Victoria 3004

Subscriptions (GST INCLUSIVE)

For 1 year

Single \$62

Family \$85

Corporate \$200

Youth \$20

(UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE)

Non-profit organisations \$85

Advertising Rates

1/8 page \$132

(2+ issues \$121 each)

1/4 page \$220

(2+ issues \$198 each)

1/2 page \$330

(2+ issues \$275 each)

Full page \$550

(2+ issues \$495 each)

Inserts \$440

for Australia-wide mailing

Pro-rata for state-wide mailing

Editorial Advisory Committee

CONVENOR

Christine Reid

MEMBERS

Max Bourke

Glenn Cooke

Paul Fox

David Jones

Anne Latreille

Megan Martin

Prue Slatyer

Christopher Vernon

ISSN 1033-3673

NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair Colleen Morris

Vice-Chair John Dwyer

Secretary Sarah Lucas

Treasurer Malcolm Faul

Elected Members

Ray Choate

Trisha Dixon

John Dwyer

Malcolm Faul

Sarah Lucas

Colleen Morris

Christine Reid

John Viska

Lynne Walker

State Representatives

Keith Jorgensen QLD

Pamela Jellie VIC

Wendy Joyner SA

Ivan Saltmarsh TAS

Jill Scheetz ACT

Eleanor Dartnall NSW

Sue Monger WA

BRANCH CONTACTS

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Tony Byrne

PO Box 1630

Canberra ACT 2601

tonybyrne@effect.net.au

Queensland

Keith Jorgensen

14 Petrina St

Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113

Phone: 07 3341 3933

jorgenk@picknowl.com.au

South Australia

Wendy Joyner

PO Box 7, Mannum SA 5238

Phone: 08 8569 1197

pwjoyner@bigpond.com.au

Southern Highlands

Eleanor Dartnall

478 Argyle Street

Moss Vale NSW 2577

Phone: 02 4869 1825

edartnall@hewsondartnall.com.au

Sydney & Northern NSW

Stuart Read

Phone: 02 9873 8554 (w)

stuart.read@planning.nsw.gov.au

Tasmania

Ivan Saltmarsh

125 Channel Rd, Taroona TAS 7053

Phone: 03 6227 8515

ivanof@bigpond.com

Victoria

Pamela Jellie

5 Claremont Cres

Canterbury VIC 3126

pdjellie@hotmail.com

Western Australia

Sue Monger

9 Rosser Street

Cottesloe WA 6011

susanmonger@yahoo.com.au



William Sharp Macleay (1792–1865): resin copy of marble portrait bust (1865) by Charles Summers in the collection of the Linnean Society of London—see article on page 4.

Elizabeth Bay House collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW

Cover: Quandong (*Santalum accuminatum*), watercolour over pencil (2002) painted by Katrina Syme from a specimen collected at Kojonup, WA, from the new book *Brush with Gondwana*—see review on page 28. Also keep a look-out for our next issue, which will feature Australian plants.

From the editors

Christina Dyson and Richard Aitken

With this issue we bring the twentieth volume of *Australian Garden History* to a conclusion and look forward with keen anticipation to our twenty-first. A twenty-first birthday is cause for celebration, and for Australian Garden History Society members and our wider audience who follow the Society through our website <gardenhistorysociety.org.au> we have a treat in store. But this is getting ahead of ourselves.

On a personal note this issue brings to a conclusion the first volume which we have co-edited. We have been very gratified by the encouraging feedback provided by members—at the Bowral conference, at branch functions, and through correspondence. We welcome this interaction with our readers, and trust that the journal will evolve as our members engage with the objectives of the Society (printed each issue on the rear cover).

A core objective of the Society is to assist in the conservation of culturally significant gardens and designed landscapes, and to this end we have introduced a new section in the journal entitled Netscape. In this we intend to introduce readers to the many possibilities opened up for garden history research through the World Wide Web. The term itself is a relatively new one—the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives its earliest use as recently as 1993—and it refers to the only-slightly-older Internet, that global computer network ‘consisting of a loose confederation of interconnected networks which use standardised communication protocols’ (to quote the august *OED*). The possibilities of on-line access to historical data—including newspapers, images, and documents—are boundless, and although such digital data can not replace rare and original material, it can greatly facilitate enhanced access.

But back to our anniversary. At its recent planning day, held in Melbourne on that terrible 46-degree day—now so tragically known as Black Saturday—the National Management Committee agreed to advance planning for the digitisation of some of the Society’s earliest records, for eventual access through our website. It is hoped that this will include the journals and newsletters (from the period 1979–83) which cover the formation of the Society and its earliest years. The contributors to those early publications form a roll call of Australian garden history pioneers—Barney Hutton, Tommy Garnett, Peter Valder, Peter Watts, Howard Tanner, Oline Richards, Phyl Simons, Trevor Nottle, and others. The early journals, edited by Miranda Morris-Nunn and soon ably assisted by an editorial committee comprising Sue Ebury, Anne Latreille, and John Patrick, form a substantial and formative contribution to knowledge of Australian garden history. They deserve to be better known.

Contents

Darwin and W.S. Macleay of Elizabeth Bay House
SCOTT CARLIN
4

Ernest Leviny’s unrealised dreams for his Castlemaine villa
MANDY STROEBEL
9

Hugh Linaker, Landscape Gardener to the Lunacy Department: a unique position
JULIE MULHAUSER
12

Explorations in landscape design theory
Part One: defining the term ‘landscape’
JEANNIE SIM
21

Unconnected thoughts on gardening
STUART READ
25

Netscape: Australian Newspapers beta
26

Profile: Ray Choate
27

Reviews
28

Recently released
29

Dialogue
31

Jottanda
32

Diary dates
33

‘Cultivating Australia Felix’: AGHS Conference, Geelong, October 2009
CHRISTINE REID
35

Darwin and W. S. Macleay of Elizabeth Bay House

Scott Carlin

In 1837 William Sharp Macleay encouraged Charles Darwin to publish the natural history of the Beagle voyage, which was to form the basis of Darwin's groundbreaking *On the Origin of Species* (1859) containing his theory of evolution by natural selection. Macleay had himself been an important 'natural philosopher' and his Circular or Quinary System, given a surprising degree of credence by Darwin, provides an extraordinary insight into a pre-Darwinian world view.

On Saturday, 23 January 1836, Alexander Macleay 'gave a splendid fete at his villa at Elizabeth Bay ... attended by the officers of HMS Beagle and Zebra, many of the military and civil officers and a number of inhabitants'. The event was, unfortunately, not attended by Charles Darwin, whose journal entry for that day records his ascent of Mount Victoria on his return from Bathurst to Sydney.

The reception for the officers of HMS Beagle appears to have been one of many given by the Macleay family for visiting naval, scientific, and survey expeditions, including the United States Exploring Expedition (1839); the Antarctic expedition of James Clark Ross commanding the Erebus and Terror (1841); the Beagle's third surveying voyage to Australian waters (1838); HMS Rattlesnake under Captain Owen Stanley (1847); HMS Herald (1853 onwards); USS Vincennes, flag-ship of the United States North Pacific Expedition under Captain John Rodgers (1853), and the Royal Geographical Society Challenger expedition (1874).

In February 1836 Fanny Macleay described such a reception taking place on the lawn in front of Elizabeth Bay House (presently the pocket-sized Arthur McElhone Reserve):

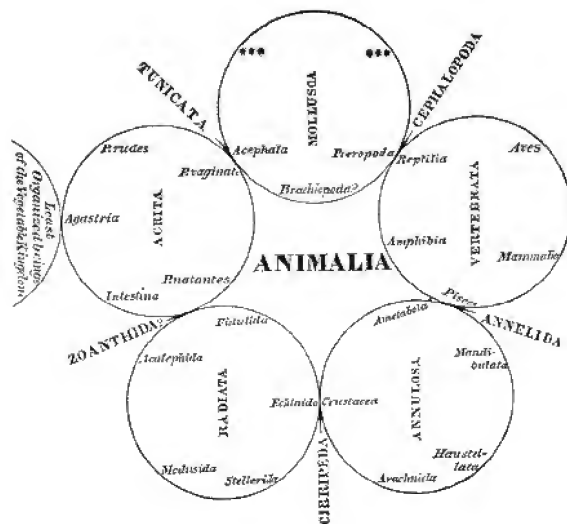
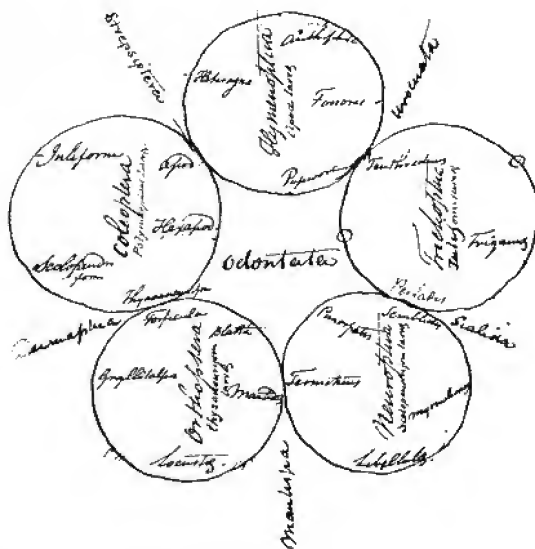
A few days ago we had a gay party of about 150 persons at Elizabeth Bay; a dejeuner in a sylvan bower, a dance upon the Lawn and fireworks ... We had the officers of the two Ships of War at the party, and the band of the 17th Reg. My Father danced down a country dance in fine style, I am told.

Alexander Macleay's exuberance was to be short lived as he was removed from office as

Colonial Secretary of New South Wales at the end of 1836 with a considerable loss of income. Elizabeth Bay House's construction had begun in March 1835 and the *Sydney Monitor's* reference to Macleay's villa suggests that it had progressed quickly. Building was to be brought to a hasty conclusion (without the house's planned colonnade) in late 1839.

Elizabeth Bay House's setting had been under development at great expense since 1826. As with Macleay's natural history collecting, art and science were interwoven in the adaptation of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century English Landscape Movement planning to the Sydney Harbour topography and flora. The site of the house had been created by blasting away of the Darlinghurst Ridge, while the lawn to the front, from which Sydney Harbour could be viewed as if a lake at the centre of a gentleman's estate, was retained by massive stone walls, a considerable engineering feat for 1820s–30s Sydney.

Alexander Macleay's eldest son, William Sharp Macleay, arrived in Sydney in March 1839, bringing bulbs from the Cape of Good Hope, for which the lawn was later famous (Holland, p.128; Fairfax, p.3). Like his father, he was a collector of natural history specimens, with a focus on insects. William Sharp Macleay was furthermore an important theorist of 'the natural system' of relationships between species in the natural world, influenced by early nineteenth century French natural philosophers such as Lamarck. In his *Horae Entomologicae: or essays on the annulose animals* (1819–21)—a revision of the genus *Scarabaeus* based on his father's collection of 1800 species of scarab beetle—he proposed what became known as the Circular or Quinary System, which is best



Upper: Macleay's sketch diagram illustrating the genus *Odontata* [sic], arranged according to the Circular or Quinary System, from the original manuscript of the *Horae Entomologicae* in the collection of the Linnean Society of London.

Lower: William Sharp Macleay's Circular or Quinary System from *Horae Entomologicae* (Part 2, 1821)—Macleay's own collection was notably strong in the Annulosa.

understood from its diagrammatic representation in the second part of *Horae Entomologicae*. Macleay believed 'that at any level of taxonomy, groups could be linked by a sequence of affinities into a circle of five elements, and the elements of one circle could be linked by analogy to the five elements of another circle' (Stanbury & Holland, p.20). This highly artificial system stemmed from 'natural theology', a desire to discern God through Divine creation and in Macleay's case an expectation of symmetry in creation.

On 27 January 1836, the day the *Sydney Monitor* published its account of the 'splendid fete' at Elizabeth Bay, Darwin lunched at Hannibal

Hawkins Macarthur's Vineyard on the banks of the Parramatta River at Rydalmere and wrote:

The house would be considered a very superior one, even in England.—There was a large party, I think about 18 in the Dining room.—It sounded strange in my ears to hear young ladies exclaim, 'Oh we are Australian, & know nothing about England'.—In the afternoon I left this most English-like house & rode by myself into Sydney. (Simpkin (ed.), p.60)

Darwin's later acquaintance with William Sharp Macleay suggests that he may have had an opportunity to visit Elizabeth Bay in the closing days of January 1836. However, of this nothing is recorded. Darwin's diary entries for 28–30 January, when the *Beagle* left for Hobart Town, are filled with views of colonial society—its lack of respectability and the rush to be rich—that the Macarthur and Macleay families would have shared.

On the *Beagle*'s return, Darwin met William Sharp Macleay in London. In a letter to the Rev. Leonard Jenyns dated 10 April 1837, Darwin wrote:

During the last week several of the zoologists of this place have been urging me to consider the possibility of publishing the 'Zoology of the Beagle's Voyage' on some uniform plan. Mr. [W.S.] Maclay [sic] has taken a great deal of interest in the subject, and maintains that such a publication is very desirable because it keeps together a series of observations [sic] made respecting animals inhabiting the same part of the world, and allows any future traveller taking them with him ... I never should have thought of this plan, if M'Clay had not been so kindly urgent on my taking it into consideration, and now I daresay the egg from the want of a little government hatching will be added. (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter 354)

The idea apparently germinated by William Sharp Macleay yielded abundantly. The publications based on Darwin's observations on the *Beagle* voyage included nineteen numbers of *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle* (1838–43); *Journal of Researches* (1839, 1845); and the three volumes of *The Geology of the Voyage of the Beagle* (1842; 1846), followed in 1851 and 1854 by his four monographs on barnacles or Cirripedia (Nicholas & Nicholas, p.173).

An unusual survival amongst the Macleay family's original collections—an engraved portrait of Dr Robert Waring Darwin (1766–1848)—suggests a somewhat 'familial' connection between W.S. Macleay and the Darwins at this time. Engraved portraits were usually distributed to subscribers to public or testimonial portraits and often exchanged between colleagues. Macleay's role



Watercolour by Conrad Martens entitled: 'Vineyard, Parramatta River', 1856—based on an earlier version dated 1840. Martens had been artist on the Beagle voyage between October 1833 and October 1834 before reaching Sydney in 1835. Darwin met up with his former travelling companion in Sydney and purchased sketches from him.

in presiding over the Zoological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Liverpool in 1837 may have provided an opportunity to visit Darwin senior in Shrewsbury (Fletcher, p.605). Possibly of greater value to Macleay, was Charles Darwin's presentation to him of a flea, collected during the voyage of the Beagle.

In 1839 Darwin's servant Syms Covington decided to emigrate to Australia. Darwin wrote a reference for him to Macleay in Sydney saying, 'During my voyage he shot and prepared nearly all the specimens I brought home, and therefore I venture to hope, that you, who aided me so especially in publishing their descriptions, will be the more ready to lend him a helping hand.' (Nicholas & Nicholas, p.142) W.S. Macleay did not need a preparator and with this appears to have allowed his correspondence with Darwin to lapse.

On a visit to Cambridge in May 1838 Darwin and Syms Covington had copied passages from Macleay's *Horae Entomologicae*, leaving notations on the University Library's volume (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter 413). Dov Ospovat in *The Development of Darwin's Theory* (1981) indicates a more complex development than is generally assumed:

Until recently Darwin scholars have routinely treated MacLeay's system simply as an obstacle to Darwin, an absurd theory which he had to prove false in order to establish the theory of natural selection ... But what is most interesting about his numerous early references to it is that they ... show that ... [Darwin's] initial assumption was rather that MacLeay was more or less right. That is to say, Darwin assumed that there was a basis in nature for MacLeay's claims to have found that natural groups usually contain five subgroups and that there are analogical resemblances running through all groups of the animal kingdom. For a time Darwin treated these laws of MacLeay, along with the existence of osculant forms, as the results of tendencies in the evolutionary process, and he attempted to explain why analogous resemblances and groups of five are apparently regular, generally occurring consequences of transmutation. (Ospovat, p.107)

Macleay Museum,
University of Sydney



Flea (*Phthiropsylla agenoris*, Rothschild, 1904). Specimen collected by Charles Darwin, probably in Bahia Blanca, Argentina in 1832, and presented to William Sharp Macleay in c.1837–38.

Julian Holland has charted the demise of scientific acceptance of Macleay's Quinary System with the British Association meeting in 1843 as a watershed (Holland, p.137). While Macleay had been prepared to expound his theory based on a specific area of research, he did not regard it as necessary to make its testing his life's work. Darwin in contrast devoted years to taxonomy and questions such as the role of native bees in pollinating introduced clovers in New Zealand and competition between introduced and native bees in Australia as an example of the 'survival of the fittest' axiom, which was central to his theory. The geologist, the Rev. W.B. Clarke, who was appointed to the Committee of the Australian Museum with Macleay in 1840, was ambivalent in his views of his entomologist colleague, writing to Darwin on 16 January 1862:

I once saw a native hive under the same shed with English bees at the Vineyard, now 'Subiaco' Mr Hannibal McArthur's residence on the Parramatta River ... the native bee is very rare where it was once common.—I wish Mr MacLeay would give the world the benefit of his researches into our insect world. (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter 3392)

The discrediting of Macleay's Quinary System weighted heavily on Darwin's mind and he wrote to Richard Owen on 13 December 1859 that he had resolved not to publish his own theory of evolution by natural selection 'if I did not convince at least 2 or 3 competent judges' (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter 2580). In 1858 Darwin had been convinced of his theory and compelled to publish it by the receipt of a paper from Alfred Russel Wallace, a British naturalist working in South-East Asia, expressing similar views.

A copy of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was sent to W.S. Macleay from England by Robert and Georgiana Lowe (formerly of Sydney's Bronte House) on its publication in 1859. Robert Lowe had met Darwin in Cambridge in 1830. In 1920, J.J. Fletcher, President of the Linnaean Society of NSW wrote: 'To Macleay as to other natural historians it made no favourable appeal for consideration as a working-hypothesis for the solution of scientific problems ... and merely presented itself as a menace to their religious beliefs] (Fletcher, p.600).

However, Macleay's view of Divine creation was not necessarily orthodox or straight forward. His correspondence with the Rev. W.B. Clarke on



Elizabeth Bay House, Caroline Simpson collection

Conrad Martens, 'Entrance to Elizabeth Bay', 1836: this watercolour shows a pier terminating the stone retaining wall bordering the lawn in front of Elizabeth Bay House. Whether the 'sylvan bower' described by Fanny Macleay related to tree cover or a woven structure like the one depicted beneath the entrance drive to the property is unclear.

Australian fossils such as the *Diprotodon* indicates that Macleay's wide-ranging interests included the geological age of the earth and past extinctions. It was noted that Macleay disliked sectarian influence, particularly in education (Holland, pp.131, 136).

*This question is no less than
'What am I?'*

On the Origin of Species sparked debate on issues that Darwin avoided—the role of a creator and the evolution of man. These issues and their philosophical implications stimulated Macleay who wrote to Robert Lowe in May 1860:

This question is no less than 'What am I?' 'What is man?', a created being under the direct government of his Creator, or only an accidental sprout of some primordial type that was the common progenitor of both animals and vegetables. The theologian has no doubt answered those questions, but leaving the Mosaic account of the Creation to Doctors of Divinity, the naturalist finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. For, either from the facts he observes, he must believe in a special creation of organised species, which creation has been progressive and is now in full operation, or he must adopt some such view as that of Darwin, viz., that the primordial cell of life has been constantly sprouting forth of itself by 'natural selection' into all the various forms of animals and vegetables ... I am myself so far a Pantheist that I see God in everything: but then I believe in His special Providence, and that he is the constant and active sole Creator and all-wise Administrator of the Universe. (Fletcher, p.600)

In 1841, Dr Joseph Dalton Hooker, Assistant Surgeon and Botanist attached to HMS Erebus and Terror (and like Darwin, to be pre-eminent in late nineteenth century British science) left an account of 'Mr William's workshop', the preparation room located off Macleay's library: 'The smell of camphor and old specimens ... reminded me strongly of olden times, especially as I found everything in the inimitable mixture of confusion and order' (Fletcher, p.589). Today the Elizabeth Bay House library is redolent of the pre-Darwinian world of science, presided over by gentlemen amateurs for whom aesthetic and philosophical considerations were as important as empirical observation.



Photo: Scott Hill

Elizabeth Bay House library furnished with a desk and insect specimen cabinets owned by Alexander and William Sharp Macleay.

REFERENCES

- Darwin Correspondence Project:
<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk>
- Fairfax, Marguerite, *Memories of Our Mother*, Anglican Press, Sydney, 1962.
- Fletcher, James Joseph, 'The Society's Heritage from the Macleays', part 1, *Linnaean Society of NSW Proceedings*, 1920.
- Holland, Julian, 'Diminishing circles: W.S. Macleay in Sydney, 1839–1865', *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 11 (2), December 1996, pp.103–147.
- Nicholas, F.W., & Nicholas, J.M., *Charles Darwin in Australia*, rev. ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002.
- Ospovat, Dov., *The Development of Darwin's Theory: natural history, natural theology, and natural selection, 1838–1859*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.
- Stanbury, Peter, & Holland, Julian, *Mr Macleay's Celebrated Cabinet: the history of the Macleays and their museum*, Macleay Museum, Sydney, 1988.
- Simpkin, Julie, (editor), *Charles Darwin: an Australian selection*, National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra, 2008.

Scott Carlin is Head Curator of Elizabeth Bay House & Vacluse House, properties of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. Elizabeth Bay House is open Friday to Sunday, 9.30am to 4pm.

Ernest Leviny's unrealised dreams for his Castlemaine villa

Mandy Stroebel

Ernest Leviny, best known for his estate Buda at Castlemaine in Victoria's central goldfields, also owned land nearby where he planned and partially planted a magnificent new villa garden, recalled in a set of superb watercoloured plans.

For most of us, Ernest Leviny is a name we associate only with Buda, the historic house and garden in the central Victorian goldfields town of Castlemaine. When Leviny bought the property in 1863 (then known as Delhi Villa) it seems that he did not intend Buda to be the family home we know today, a home occupied by the Leviny's until the youngest daughter Hilda died in 1981. Indeed, Ernest Leviny, by then a retired gold- and silversmith with investments in property and mining ventures, aspired to building a much grander home for his large family. Between 1874 and 1876, Leviny purchased approximately six acres of land on Hargraves Street, only a short walk from Buda. The land incorporated the residential allotments bounded by the Kaweka Flora Reserve, and Hargraves, Myring, and Kaweka Streets. His plans for the property are simply inscribed 'The Villa'. Today, the property is called Kaweka.

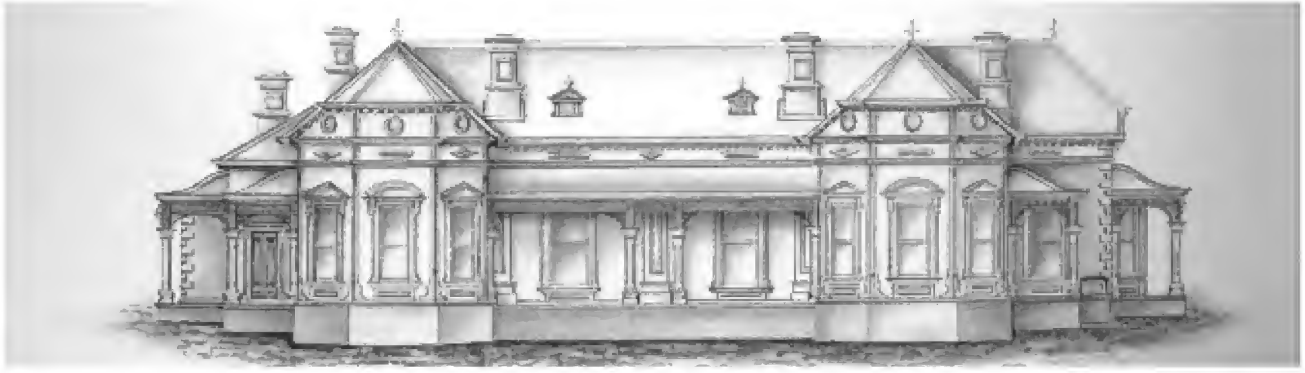
Ernest Leviny's aspirations for the Hargraves Street property are revealed in numerous exquisite watercolour and ink drawings of the proposed villa and surrounding garden. The drawings are not dated, so it is difficult to say which plan was the first and which the last, or to trace the evolution of Leviny's ideas for his dream villa. Ernest Leviny also constructed a plaster cast model of the villa but, according to Hilda, it was destroyed, so, once again, we'll never know which plan it represented. The plans for the villa reveal front, side, and rear elevations for both single and two-storey dwellings in different architectural styles, and detailed floor plans that appear to have grown increasingly elaborate. Leviny clearly proposed building a gentleman's residence of classical beauty and proportions; a residence befitting a man of his wealth and status. After all, he was reputed to be one of the wealthiest residents in the Borough.

Two drawings reveal Ernest Leviny's plans for the garden. The less detailed and possibly earlier of the two plans shows a circular carriageway enclosing a lawn with scrolled garden beds. The second

and possibly final plan, larger than an A3 folio, is an elegant, well-preserved watercolour and ink plan, the detail of which is painstakingly rendered. Measurements of paths, garden beds, and spacing between trees, and notes about posts and other construction details are pencilled on the plan. The house is set well back from Hargraves Street and approached by the circular carriageway that features in the first-mentioned plan. Hargraves Street is screened by trees in an expanse of lawn studded with ornately shaped garden beds like jewels in an emerald setting. Decoratively planted orchards feature either side of the house. Dark pencil lines across the orchard blocks suggest that Leviny was still playing with the design of the garden.

The drawings of the proposed villa and garden are all unsigned. In an interview with Hilda Leviny recorded in the 1970s, however, she confirmed that the plans were for the Hargraves Street property and that her father executed the drawings himself. John Jones, a former curator at the National Gallery of Australia, considered the drawings to be 'of exceptional quality', suggesting that Ernest Leviny may have received training as a draughtsman in his earlier years in Europe.

Ernest Leviny remained owner of the Hargraves Street property for twenty years. During this period, he began laying out and planting the garden. It is possible that he obtained seeds or plants for trees such as the Bunya pine from Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, who offered free trees for collection from the Melbourne Botanic Gardens during his directorship. The full extent of the garden that Leviny created will never be known. Two helpful reports in the *Mount Alexander Mail* on 28 and 29 January 1890, however, provide some clues. A couple of local boys were charged with stealing a tomahawk and saw (the property of Ernest Leviny) and wilfully damaging his property at Hargraves Street. They were found guilty by the Chief Magistrate of the Castlemaine Police Court. A large tank was hacked with the



Detail of 'Front Elevation of Villa', drawing attributed to Ernest Leviny, depicting an unexecuted scheme for his proposed residence in Hargraves Street, Castlemaine (today the site of the property Kaweka).

tomahawk and its cock knocked off allowing all the water to run out; trees were cut and stripped of their fruit; the window of the garden house was cracked and its walls 'besmeared with excreta'; and flower pots were broken. Putting aside 'the great and wanton destruction' caused by the boys, the reports reveal that there was a garden house at the Hargraves property; that it contained flower pots (suggesting that Leviny was propagating plants for the garden); that there was a water tank (presumably filled by run off from the roof of the garden house); and that an orchard existed. As late as 1892, Ernest Leviny was charged rates for the garden at Hargraves Street.

Leviny's dreams of a grand gentleman's residence and garden were never realised. In 1895 he sold the Hargraves Street property to John Thompson of the successful Thompson's engineering works in Castlemaine. Thompson built the present Kaweka in 1896, a single-storey brick residence with granite foundations whose footprint closely matches that of the villa Leviny proposed building. No doubt the Thompson's had the benefit of the garden laid out by Ernest during his twenty years of ownership. The circular carriageway and ornamental lawn are present to this day. Instead of orchards either side of the house, however, cypress hedges were planted which, by the time the present owners, Ellen and David Bailie took possession of Kaweka in 1986, overshadowed and darkened the house.

Ernest Leviny's reasons for selling the Hargraves Street property are open to conjecture. Perhaps his family was too settled at Buda, thus discouraging Ernest from proceeding with his plans for the property. Indeed, Hilda in her interview said that her mother refused to move. Perhaps Leviny simply could not afford to build a new residence; it is possible that his financial affairs were affected by the 1890s depression. The removal of his daughter Ilma from her boarding school in Melbourne may be an indication of straitened financial circumstances. Whatever the reason, Ernest Leviny's attention focused on Buda in the

early 1890s, as is evidenced by his acquisition of additional land and the extensive alterations to the former Delhi Villa. After investing so much creative energy in the villa and garden plans for the Hargraves Street property, I am compelled to speculate that Ernest Leviny was reluctant to part with the property, even after the substantial extensions to Buda in the early 1890s. He kept the property until 1895, his dream unfulfilled but a new vision for Buda created.

Opposite: Two garden plans attributed to Ernest Leviny for his proposed new villa residence—although work on laying out the garden was commenced in the late nineteenth century, the extent of development is uncertain.

Acknowledgments

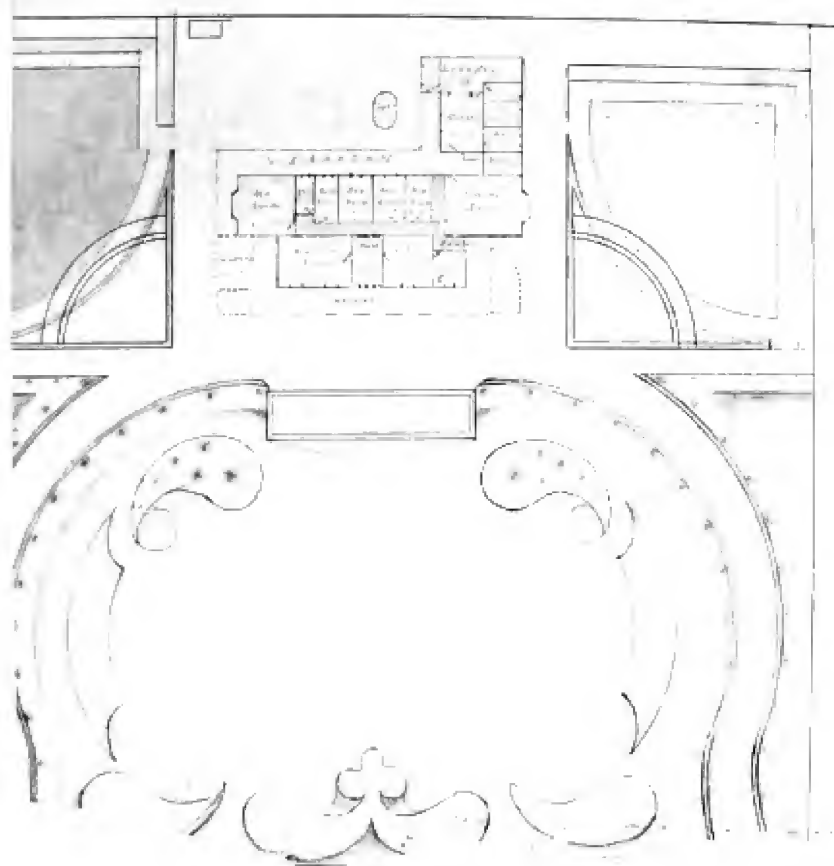
Thank you to Lauretta Zillies (Buda House Curator) for sharing her knowledge of Ernest Leviny and the plans for the proposed villa and garden at the Hargraves Street property, and to Dianne Thomson (Buda Garden Curator) and members of the Buda Management Committee, in particular John Jones and Mary Thompson, for their comments on the text of this article. Thank you also to David and Ellen Bailie for sharing their knowledge of Kaweka.

Notes on sources

This article is based on research contained in Nigel Lewis and Associates, 'Buda: conservation analysis and policies', unpublished report, August 1988. The opinions of John Jones are from the *Midland Express*, 1 May 2007. In addition to the references to the *Mount Alexander Mail* in the text, this source also contains an obituary for Ernest Leviny (7 March 1905).

The drawings reproduced here are all held by the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum (Buda collection).

Mandy Stroebe trained in horticulture at Burnley and is currently researching the history of gardens in Victoria's central goldfields.



Hugh Linaker, Landscape Gardener to the Lunacy Department: a unique position

Julie Mulhauser

Hugh Linaker is regarded as a horticultural pioneer whose career as a landscape gardener in the employment of both local and state government during 1889–1938 charts the influence of modernist ideas on Victoria's public landscape.

Hugh Linaker (1872–1938) worked as a gardener and landscape gardener for local government in Ballarat East (1889–1901) and Ararat (1901–12) before important roles for the Victorian state government (1912–38). His career coincided with the era of improvers which presented opportunities of which he was uniquely placed to take advantage. Linaker's career has been sketched in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* but in this article, opportunity has been taken to give a closer reading based on detailed research in primary sources.

Throughout his career, Linaker lobbied for and eventually gained increased status and professionalism but this was not shared by contemporary landscape gardeners of the modernist era. Modernism was not limited to an orderly aesthetic but an ideology underpinning the whole process of landscape design and creation. This is what Linaker meant when he talked of 'working on modern lines'. Landscape was an important vehicle to the era's central themes of national identity, efficiency, and progress.

The improvers

Improvers, in the sense of drawing on moral arguments for an economic end, sought not only to reform humans and their society but also the environment. They believed wholeheartedly in progress as a solution to contemporary problems. While the process was claimed to be rational and scientific, they acted on ideas that were intuitive. They believed the environment was capable of transforming the health and behaviour of people. Labour in landscape was given a special status as 'curative work'. Medical terms such as 'treatment' were applied to the process of changing the environment. In turn the environment became the treatment of lunacy and tuberculosis.

The most important of these improvers to influence Linaker's career was Sir Stanley Argyle MLA (radiologist, ex-AIF, and conservative politician). He and his friend Dr John Springthorpe (psychiatrist and ex-AIF), were foes of Sir James Barrett (ophthalmologist, ex-AIF, conservative politician, and polymath), an energetic reformer who strove for 'national efficiency'. Among Barrett's numerous appointments were as a founder of the Town Planning and Parks Association of Victoria and honorary secretary of the advisory committee for the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

Barrett had an acrimonious relationship with Springthorpe and Argyle who had both served with him in Egypt in 1915. Historian Stephen Murray-Smith credited the two men with disseminating information about Barrett that resulted in him being relieved of his military duties and his executive role with the Red Cross. Subsequent inquiries exonerated him of wrongdoing. The men maintained an antagonistic relationship which was important as they jockeyed to influence public affairs in Victoria. Murray-Smith believed this antagonism to be a leading reason for Argyle's entry into state politics in 1920 when he stood successfully as an independent against Barrett who was the endorsed National candidate for the seat of Toorak. The Australian Women's National League was, according to historian Geoff Browne, influential in securing this victory. The League was an affiliate organisation of the National Council of Women that was later granted land and labour by Argyle in 1934 to build the Pioneer Women's Garden in Melbourne's Domain (designed by Linaker).

Other influential improvers had an interest in horticulture. Dr W. Ernest Jones (Victoria's first Inspector General of the Insane, from 1905–37), lobbied for a landscape gardener for the Lunacy Department to be based at Mont Park, with Linaker appointed the first incumbent in 1912. Jones, as his colleague Springthorpe pointed out, was a 'builder' and lover of 'trees, foliage, shrubs and flowers'. Springthorpe himself shared this passion, lavishing much care on his garden at Murrumbidgee and making many references to horticulture in his extensive diaries. Others included Sir John Monash (war hero, engineer, and chairman of the State Electricity Commission) and William Calder (chairman of the Country Roads Board).

In 1916 Monash complained to friend Billie Card that 'I am a pretty patient individual but this beastly war is getting to be rather a bore, and not nearly so much fun as building bridges, or touring around the world, or tending roses in my garden'. Linaker designed and facilitated the street planting and parks at the model SEC town Yallourn in Gippsland (1923). Intended as a garden city to house workers at the nearby brown coal power station, Yallourn was part of a strategy of avoiding industrial disputes that had interrupted coal supply elsewhere in Australia. A secure and independent supply of power was fundamental to the growth of the state of Victoria.

Highways, over which would roll the 'trade of the country', were also critical to this growth and provided an opportunity for 'beautification'. An ambitious plan to have plantations extending from Geelong to Melbourne was commenced in 1924 by the Geelong Town Planning Association. The aim was to complete the avenue by 1934 in time for Victoria's centenary celebrations. Calder betrayed his personal horticultural interest when in 1927 he recommended an appraisal of the health of these trees. Linaker, the 'plantation expert at Mont Park', was given the task of supervising the planting at the Melbourne end. This was despite his recommendations being 'turned down' by J.T. Smith, Melbourne City Council curator and Victorian Tree Planters Association (VTPA) founder, after 'demonstrating before experts his plan and list of trees'. Linaker's involvement represented a coup and a validation of his expertise: A.M. Zwar MLC referred to it in 1928 as Linaker's 'victory'.

Competition not only existed between the experts but also the improvers. Outspoken critics of Argyle and Linaker's most significant project—



Family portrait of Hugh Linaker dressed in his customary suit, vest, and tie, hatted, pipe in hand.

the Shrine environs and the King's Domain, Melbourne (1933)—were associated with either the Advisory Committee of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens or the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee; many were VTPA members. These included W. Russell Grimwade (Botanic Gardens Advisory Committee), Dr W. Kent Hughes (VTPA life member and chairman of the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee), Sir William Brunton (VTPA life member, former Lord Mayor, and member with Argyle of the National War Memorial Executive Committee), and Frank Stapley (involved with Barrett's Victorian Town Planning and Parks Association, Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works member, National War Memorial Executive Committee, MCC councillor, and chair of the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee).

‘Every workman is worthy of his hire’

Throughout his career Hugh Linaker fought to establish his legitimacy as a horticultural expert and to be remunerated for his work. He successfully gained the support of influential figures who recognised his value, not only for his horticultural knowledge but also for his ability to design, cultivate nursery stock, and most importantly build the schemes using ‘economic methods’.

Linaker’s ‘shrewd diplomacy’, energy, and enthusiasm ensured that his landscape plans were not thwarted. He negotiated ‘mutually advantageous exchanges’, ensuring costs were kept low, but more significantly he was experienced and adept in managing unskilled, and in some cases conscripted, workers who labored on his projects. His first experience with these workers was in Ararat. Patients from the nearby asylum were used in ‘working bees’ constructing the town’s Alexandra Gardens.

Linaker’s horticultural expertise was grounded in experience. He was conscious that ‘status has great bearing’ and sought to have his status elevated by not only applying for positions outside his department (including the curatorship of Melbourne Botanic Gardens) but by having his own position reclassified. His attempts at reclassification sought not only to increase his remuneration but to give him authority. This appears to have been particularly important to him when he was directly competing with other horticultural professionals, in particular, Smith and Frederick J. Rae, Superintendent of Melbourne Botanic Gardens, whose authority was legitimised by a formal educational background. These three men were important contributors to the VTPA and served together from 1928 on a sub-committee to advise on tree planting in the environs of the Shrine.

The services of a landscape gardener such as Linaker promised to facilitate increasingly ambitious public landscapes. The minutes of the Ararat Borough Council document a change in thinking about the construction of such landscapes. The 28-acre reserve which came to be known as the Ararat Botanical Gardens and later Alexandra Park was fenced in 1863 and laid out by prison labour using a plan and plants supplied by Mueller. By 1870 the gardens appeared neglected and the councilors decided to dismiss the gardener as he was a ‘relatively useless servant of the council’. They chose to replace him with a windmill and the services provided by the governor of the Ararat Gaol, saving £120 per year.

The windmill did not eventuate. The state of the gardens remained poor but the councillors could

not justify the cost or the ‘luxury’ of a gardener. Despite this, they wished for an ‘immediate local attraction’ to advertise the locality to ‘globe trotters and holiday makers in the colony’. It was not until 1897, when they became worried that the Lands Department considered the gardens neglected and were considering sub-dividing it, that greater attention was given to ‘improving’ the gardens.

Instead of a gardener being a ‘luxury’, Cr Boberski argued that they should employ a ‘professional man to draw up a landscape plan, so that the works might be set about in the proper manner’ and in the end cost less. The other councillors were less convinced that any special expertise was required. They considered the Gardens committee was capable of deciding on the necessary ‘improvements’. Cr Boberski wisely countered that the idea of using a ‘professional man’ was to ‘prevent a conflict of opinion’. By using a committee they ran the risk of clashing proposals and that, in the end, they would have ‘something that was acceptable to no one’. J.W. Horsfall of Stawell produced a plan that same year but the council still had difficulty finding the funds to realise the plan.

In August 1901 Hugh Linaker commenced work as the new curator. He was chosen from 65 applicants for his knowledge of horticulture. His real genius was in his ability to ‘get people to assist the movement’. ‘He managed to achieve a great deal on a very small expenditure’ in Ararat and maintained that ‘it has always been my desire to produce the maximum return for the minimum outlay and work on modern lines’. Thus when Linaker accepted the position of landscape gardener to the Lunacy Department in April 1912 he was entering a ‘wider field’.



State Library of Victoria (H98.69/4)

‘[Linaker’s] designs are both unconventional and attractive. There are no monotonous sets of squares and circles. Rustic archways, running water, fountains, a lake with tree clad islands, a winding carriage drive and children’s playground ... make the whole a most effective design in landscape gardening’ (*Ararat Advertiser*, 21 June 1910).



Courtesy Iliya Bircanin

Hugh Linaker, Landscape Gardener to Victoria's Lunacy Department—the workforces that built his projects were mostly unskilled and in some cases conscripted, necessitating 'tactful and careful management'. In 1915 Dr Hollow, medical superintendent of Mont Park Hospital, commented that 'in successfully handling men, both Attendants and patients, his capability is almost unique'.

'Your Expert'

Linaker's real opportunity was as the gardening 'expert' of Dr W. Ernest Jones. Born in 1867 in Staffordshire, Jones was interviewed for his position in 1904 in England by the recently retired Premier of Victoria Sir William Irvine. The position was created as part of the Irvine government reform of the *Lunacy Act* in 1903. In contrast to his predecessors, Jones was given the power over the Lunacy Department employees previously held by the Public Services Commissioner. This power—due to a 'stupid blunder'—was not given to Jones's successor in 1937, Dr John Catarinich. This would have important implications for Linaker late in his career. Jones's desire for a garden expert in the Lunacy Department was initially expressed in his first interim report in 1905.

In 1911, with the opening of Mont Park imminent, Jones appealed to the government for an expert well trained gardener who would 'have his headquarters at Mont Park [and] ... advise with regard to the other institutions and he would have under his immediate care a nursery and large fruit garden'. In 1912 cabinet approved

the position if a 'suitable man at a reasonable salary can be obtained'. Hugh Linaker was such a man and was chosen from 42 applicants—he had previously worked for Jones as early as 1909 while still employed at Ararat. He set about laying out the grounds and establishing the nursery at Mont Park: the house built for Linaker and his family still stands in the Mont Park grounds close to Plenty Road.

The opening of Mont Park gave the opportunity to turn Melbourne's earlier asylum at Yarra Bend into a 'national park'. Jones recounted that in 1905 a deputation to Premier Bent proposed to close the Kew and Yarra Bend asylums and create a 'Thousand Acre Parkland Scheme'. Yarra Bend became a national park in 1926 when the last patients were moved to Mont Park and the asylum demolished. At the 1929 VTPA conference Linaker proposed that the area could be transformed into a 'scenic gem'. He was given the opportunity to draw up a plan for this new park by the park committee, chaired by Tom Tunnecliffe MLA who had earlier been 'impressed with Linaker's abilities'.

Jones placed a very high value on aesthetics. His plans for Mont Park were not only influenced by economic imperatives but by contemporary theories of institutional architecture. Jones planned a grand estate. Despite the already very large grounds (431 hectares) Jones tried to acquire part of the adjacent Macleod estate on the corner of Waiora Road and Cherry Street during the early 1920s. Revealingly, Jones referred to the land as a ‘Naboth’s Vineyard’—by which he meant a coveted possession. Such a purchase could not be justified on a need for more land. A possible explanation is that Jones desired a grand entrance to Mont Park from Waiora Road. Jones had expressed a desire to ‘do all we can to beautify the approaches’. In 1922 Linaker drew up plans for grand entrance gates at this site and in 1925 Jones commissioned the Public Works Department to draw up plans for a head attendant’s house to act as an entrance lodge and ornate gates—neither was ever built. (At the same time there were complaints about the condition of the existing buildings and the difficulty of maintaining them.)

Linaker made an important contribution when in 1929 he facilitated the donation of a set of ornamental gates for the Plenty Road entrance from the philanthropist and pharmacist George Nicholas. His detailed description and plan view of their crescent shape indicate that he may have possibly designed them. These gates, valued at £300 were built, although now demolished, their fate unknown. The gift indicates a possible reason for Linaker’s only known non-institutional projects. Around this time he is known to have

worked on the gardens of George’s brother, Alfred Nicholas, at Carn Brae, Hawthorn, and Burnham Beeches, Sherbrooke. Given that Linaker’s services were often loaned with a view to a ‘mutually advantageous exchange’ this may also be another example of this arrangement and would help explain these anomalous projects.

Ernest Jones frequently received requests for Linaker’s assistance and for plants from the Mont Park nursery. These were directed to Linaker who appears to have acceded in nearly all cases. Jones was well aware that Linaker’s services and the plants grown in the Mont Park nursery were commodities that could be traded with other organisations although while the site visits were paid for by the department, Linaker appears to have prepared the plans and reports outside working hours.

From 1918 Linaker provided ‘plants and plans’ to the Penal Department in return for materials. The number of projects Linaker completed as a result of this arrangement was considerable. In 1923 Linaker arranged for 48 tons of ti-tree from Yallourn to be sent to Mont Park to create a wind break for the vegetable garden in exchange for plants—much to the pleasure of the SEC Chairman Sir John Monash. This arrangement was officially sanctioned but some were not and the arrangements were not only with other government departments. Despite being well occupied with duties at Mont Park in 1913, for instance, Jones directed Linaker to prepare a report and plan for Geelong Grammar School.



Courtesy Iliya Bircanin

Plenty Road Gates, Mont Park, c.1927—these were a gift from the philanthropist and pharmacist George Nicholas and possibly explain Linaker’s only known non-institutional projects, which were for George’s brother Alfred.

State Superintendent Parks and Gardens

The projects that Jones directed Linaker to undertake legitimised Linaker's claims for promotion and the eventual professionalism of his position in 1920. It also brought him into contact with many bureaucrats and politicians who became important allies—in particular Albert Zwar MLC (tannery owner and the 'uncrowned king of Beechworth') and Stanley Argyle.

As a public servant Linaker was frustrated by the difficulty in getting his professionalism acknowledged. In 1929 he complained:

in Fitzroy I know a man who owns a Spade, Barrow and Rake who presents his card branded Landscape Gardener. I am called upon to advise [and] lecture on public and national concerns and consequently feel that I have advanced above the Landscape Gardener's rank which gets a fellow nowhere.

Partly this was due to reluctance of the incumbent state government and of his superior, Dr Jones, to increase their costs but mostly it was due to his practical rather than formally educated background.

As early as 1915 Linaker requested to have his position changed to a professional class. He argued that 'similar officers in the Government service are classified in the professional division' and that he had produced 'the maximum return for the minimum outlay'. He was successful with this re-classification in 1920, the delay possibly caused by wartime distractions.

By 1925 he was still dissatisfied with both his status and remuneration. He pointed out that his services had been 'lent' to many other departments for seven years justifying a position that reflected this consultancy role. He believed his job was 'the biggest in the state' and that a new position of State Director of Horticulture would be appropriate. In this role he would be able to direct nurseries of the Lunacy, Public Works, Penal, Education, and State Rivers Departments and produce 'all state requirements in trees and plants'. While the government acknowledged that there was 'no officer of the Public Works Department competent to undertake this special class of work and were it done by an outside expert, it would involve ... the payment of heavy fees', a new position was not created. Linaker received only a promotion and a gratuity.

In 1929 Zwar again tried unsuccessfully to realise Linaker's ambition to be State Horticultural Director. He reminded Argyle that:

just before you went out of office two years ago you became interested in a very fine and capable officer in your department, Mr. Linaker. I almost feel certain you will realize the equity of giving this gentleman his proper standing by altering his position from Landscape gardener to a Director of Horticulture. I believe you told me some two years ago that you 'discovered' this gentleman.

This attempt foundered when the Public Service Commissioner found that Frederick Rae 'possess[ed] the qualifications required for the position which it is asked should be created for Mr. Linaker [and] ... the Lands Department should make available the services of Mr. Rae as required'.

Linaker had to wait until August 1933, when Argyle was Premier, to have his long-held ambition realised when he was made State Superintendent Parks and Gardens. This was despite Jones arguing for Linaker to receive a payment of a bonus (not taken out of his departmental budget) rather than reclassification. While his title changed his duties and department remained the same.

The Domain—'a one man plan'

The Shrine Environs sub-committee (Rae, Smith, and Linaker) met three times during 1928–29 and provided a report in May 1929. Although this contained no specifics as to the tree species, selection of species for the avenues became the subject of bitter debate between Rae and Smith on the one hand, and Linaker on the other. It was more than a debate on the horticultural and aesthetic merits of various trees but a validation of expertise. Added to this were the rivalries between powerful associates of the various groups these men represented—the Botanic Gardens Advisory Committee, Melbourne City Council, and Lands Department on the one side, and the Premier and Public Works Department on the other.

This background makes sense of the extremely harsh and personal attack that was made in the press after Argyle presented Linaker's plan for the new Domain on 16 June 1933. Rumors about this plan had circulated in the press as early as 21 April 1933, when the *Age* wrote that 'an officer of the Lunacy Department has been instructed to remodel the whole of the Domain'. The writer mused that it 'would be interesting to know how the proposal to hand over an area remodeled by an individual not under their jurisdiction [i.e. MCC curator and MCC Parks and Gardens Committee] is viewed'. The report continued that 'it is strange that the rumored proposals are stated to have emanated from the PWD' and not

the Lands Department which had control of the Botanic Gardens and Domain. Four days later the *Age* continued the argument, stating ‘why make confusion more confounded by calling in a landscape gardener from another department? If the area is to be under the control and administration of the curator of the [MCC] ... surely he is the person to whom the remodeling should be entrusted’.

The criticism of Linaker’s plan in the press became more vociferous and voluminous. On 5 July 1933 in a long article by an anonymous writer, the *Age* criticised Linaker’s scheme as a ‘hastily-conceived ... one man plan’. The author concentrated on the tree species selected, claiming that the ‘selection and disposition of the trees in the proposed lay-out is the gravest fault to be found with the proposal’. They also made specific comment on the removal of the avenue of Queensland Box (*Tristania conferta*) and the lawns—all of which had been planted by Rae and Smith at the Shrine on the advice of Grimwade. (The subjects and wording of this article are similar to a report J.T. Smith wrote in March 1935, prior to regaining control of Domain and Shrine, that while ‘not tendered as a criticism of the work’ was just that. This points to Smith as the source of this ‘informed criticism’.)

On 6 July 1933, the *Age*, quoted a ‘prominent authority on tree planting’ as describing Linaker’s scheme as ‘childishly poor’—‘designed by a man ignorant of the capabilities of the site and the suitability of the trees proposed. He was quite satisfied that many of them would not grow at all, while others would be of no value even if they did grow’. On the same page Argyle defended his ‘pet-scheme’, pointing out that the plan ‘has been subjected to a storm of ill-informed and in some cases ill-natured criticism’.

*‘if anything worth while is to
be achieved the Government
must not emulate the behaviour
in the fable of the man, his son
and their donkey and take
everyone’s advice’*

Drawing attention to the particularly personal nature of the criticism he reminded readers that ‘there is such a thing as human nature and ... Departmental rivalry or even perhaps the green eyed monster’. With echoes of the earlier arguments advanced in Ararat on the hazards of



Courtesy Iliya Bircanin

Mont Park Hospital had opened in 1912 and by the following year there were cricket, tennis, and croquet facilities and a pair of Nymphaea ponds (in front of the Farm Worker’s Block), an early work of the Linaker era.

design by committee, he pointed out that ‘no two landscape gardeners would agree as to the details in such a scheme’ and that ‘if anything worth while is to be achieved the Government must not emulate the behaviour in the fable of the man, his son and their donkey and take everyone’s advice’. He defended his power to ‘accept and seek advice where [he] considers advice will be helpful and from quarters that are competent to give such advice’.



State Library of Victoria (H97.279/7)

The Pioneer Women’s Garden, the Domain, Melbourne. While the formal design of the garden was dictated by the concept the vibrant color scheme and emphatic use of *Cupressus* is typical of many of Linaker’s schemes—demonstrating the ‘richness’ that he valued.

Kent Hughes, in the *Age* (6 July 1933), complained that ‘the Premier considered Mr. Linaker’s opinion of more importance than that of the Director of the Botanical Gardens, the curator of the MCC parks and [Rae’s deputy] Mr. St. John, quite apart from the opinions of the late Sir John Monash and himself’. He went on to say that ‘if Mr. Linaker is going to reproduce the layout at Mont Park it would be far better to leave the Domain as it is and not waste money on a similar ill-considered scheme’. Linaker’s position as ‘an officer of the lunacy department’ was a source of sneering derision for the critics of the ‘Premier’s pet scheme’ but at least his department was independent of Argyle’s foe Barrett.

Important contributions by Linaker remain within the Domain. In particular, the Pioneer Women’s Garden (1934), designed for the National Council of Women of Victoria (NCWV). The concept for a sunken garden, similar to Hampton Court Garden, was suggested by Lady Mason of the Victoria League. The land was granted by Argyle and built by sustenance (compulsory dole) workers. The NCWV raised the funds for the materials, by amongst other things, charging for names of Victorian women to be placed on sheets of paper that were buried in a casket beneath the sundial in the garden.

Linaker’s design was definitely not to Edna Walling’s liking. In February 1935 she wondered, in the *Herald*, how:

anyone with any artistic perception admire the collection of materials that has gone into the

construction of the Garden of Remembrance – the raucous blue tiles pointed with yellow cement, the reddish toned honeycomb rocks, the cold grey concrete bridge of grotesque design; and the confused planting that shows no understanding of plant ecology or the study of plants in relation to their environment?

Walling, like Linaker, was competing with other horticultural professionals to not only have her expertise recognised and more importantly, used. Linaker was in the enviable position that he was able to build many of his designs.

In March 1935 control of the Domain and Shrine environs reverted from the PWD to the MCC. The *Age*, which had earlier given voice to critics of Argyle’s scheme for the Domain and Shrine and did so again in November 1935 when it reported a tour by the VTPA of MCC-controlled parks. ‘Everywhere there was nothing but praise for the manner in which these open spaces of the city had been developed and were being maintained ... and strong condemnation of the trees planted in the surrounds of the Shrine of Remembrance’. The extensive reporting condemning these trees and its tone and language, make it clear that Linaker was the target.

‘Not essential to the Mental Hygiene Department’

Hugh Linaker remained State Superintendent Parks and Gardens until five days before his death, on 9 October 1938, but ceased to be an officer of the Lunacy Department after May 1937 after which he was placed on a temporary contract with the PWD. He was specifically

employed to undertake works ‘in connection with unemployment relief schemes by various authorities’. This led to a large number of projects at diverse sites throughout Victoria right up until his death.

The change in his employment appears linked the retirement of Jones as Inspector General of the Insane in May 1937. As Linaker was past the retirement age of 60, he had to apply for an extension every six months. In 1937 his application for an extension was sent in April rather than when it was scheduled in June and was for one year rather than the usual six month extension.

Jones’s successor, Dr John Catarinich, was not given the same power of Public Service Commissioner that Jones held in the Mental Hygiene Department. Whether this loss was due to a ‘stupid blunder’ or an assertion of more political control, Catarinich had less power than Jones. The April 1937 application for a one year extension was possibly an attempt by Jones to give Linaker a more secure tenure.

It was in vain. The application was considered by the cabinet of Premier Albert Dunstan, whose biographer, John Paul, includes as key features of his premiership miserliness with money and a deep suspicion of the public service. The cabinet decided that ‘retention of [Linaker’s] services [was] not essential to the M H Department’. The PSC claimed that the ‘only way Mr. Linaker can be retained is by creating [a position] outside the M H Department and transferring him to it’.

Linaker’s position in the PWD advising on works undertaken ‘in connection with unemployment relief schemes’ was temporary. Initially renewals were six monthly but by March 1938 this had reduced to three monthly before the previous renewal had elapsed. By September he was employed for only one month.

D.J.A. McSwan, the assistant curator at Mont Park, replaced Linaker in September 1937. The position was reduced in status to that of general division rather than the professional division for which Linaker had argued so long. The status and title of State Superintendent Parks and Gardens were unique to Linaker. With Jones no longer Inspector General, the curator of Mont Park was no more ‘lent to other Departments’. The opportunities offered to Linaker by Jones’s desire to improve landscapes beyond the control of his department were not given to McSwan. Inquiries on his behalf did not shed much light on why his position differed so much from his predecessor.

The conclusion was that ‘not much has been put on paper’ and that Linaker’s position

had gradually been reclassified ‘in a higher direction as a result of works he performed for other Departments, notably the Public Works’. The belief that Linaker ‘visited other Mental Institutions of his own initiative’ was incorrect.

Linaker’s personal qualities enabled him to take advantage of opportunities created by the political elite of the day and their desire to ‘improve’ society and the environment. Linaker’s career fortunes were in turn politicised. His attachment to a department outside the control of the Lands Department was possibly a factor in his appointment by Argyle to design his most important project—the Domain and Shrine environs. Linaker’s entree as a public servant to this sphere was via Jones. Jones made special mention of Linaker in his reminiscences of 1957. He described him as a ‘Landscape Gardener [who] did valuable work for the gardens in the Department as well as laying out the Shrine gardens’. The value Jones referred to was not only aesthetic but moral and most especially economic. Linaker’s position as Landscape Gardener to the Lunacy Department was indeed ‘unique’, not to the department, but to the man and his time.

REFERENCES

Primary material

Sources for this article were drawn from multiple series in the collections of the Public Record Office Victoria, and held in the archives of the City of Melbourne, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and the Department of Human Services.

Secondary Sources

Barry, Danny, and Barry, Judy (eds), *Ararat: 1857–2007*, Ararat 150th Committee—Ararat Rural City Council, Ararat, Vic., 2007.

Bircanin, Iliya, and Short, Alex, *Glimpses of the Past: Mont Park, Larundel, Plenty*, [The Authors, Melbourne, Vic.], 1995.

Serle, Geoffrey, *John Monash: a biography*, Melbourne University Press in association with Monash University, Melbourne, 1982.

Stewart, Elizabeth, *Places in the park: a sixty year history of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation, 1926–1986*, The Institute, [Canberra], 1991.

Strangio, Paul, and Costar, Brian (eds), *The Victorian Premiers 1856–2006*, Federation Press, Annandale, N.S.W., 2006.

Julie Mulhauser is a Melbourne writer with an interest in landscape design history.

Explorations in landscape design theory

Jeannie Sim

This essay is the first in a series on theoretical matters which is intended to provoke discussion. These ideas were part of the literature review within the author's doctoral studies.¹ Each essay explores a component of design theory that has relevance to all who are interested in garden or landscape history and design. The essays are focussed on the kinds of terms used to describe this area of study. Choosing the correct term is a key to understanding and communicating effectively. The essays in the series will compare the terms 'landscape' and 'garden', 'designed landscape' and 'cultural landscape'; explore the parameters of design and theory; and finally investigate landscape design and landscape architecture.

Part One: defining the term 'landscape'

Landscape is not scenery, it is not a political unit; it is really no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the surface of the earth. Whatever its shape or size it is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment; it is always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden and unpredictable change.²

'Landscape' is a term used by several disciplines, including fine arts, landscape architecture, and geography. The breadth of usage reflects a diversity of meaning. The distinguished landscape historian J.B. Jackson alludes to this situation in his influential book *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984): 'Why is it, I wonder, that we have trouble agreeing on the meaning of landscape?'³ Perhaps, this disagreement is because there are many people of different backgrounds wanting to use the same word. Perhaps, the word 'landscape' alone is not enough; it needs to be qualified by another descriptor to be definitive, for instance, designed landscapes, or indeed, vernacular landscapes. Dictionaries of various sorts provided preliminary answers towards the meaning of this term, although Jackson was convinced that the generalist ones provided out-of-date definitions based on artists' interpretations determined over three hundred years ago. With his

comments in mind, the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes landscape as:

1.a. A picture representing natural inland scenery, as distinguished from a sea picture [seascape], portrait, etc.

2.a. A view or prospect of natural scenery, such as can be taken in at a glance from one point of view; a piece of country scenery.

2.b. A tract of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features, esp. considered as a product of modifying or shaping processes and agents (usually natural).⁴

These ideas about landscape reflect the diversity of meaning and use that this word has acquired since its original Anglo-Saxon forms were introduced to Britain after the fifth-century CE. Landscape is defined by geographer James Duncan as: 'a polysemic term referring to the appearance of an



The plateau of Hobart's Mount Wellington gives expression to the most general definition of 'landscape' as representing so-called 'natural scenery'.

area, the assemblage of objects used to produce that appearance, and the area itself.⁵ This definition indicates the diversity of meaning even within one discipline, albeit the wide-ranging one called geography, a diversity mirrored in the landscape architectural profession.

American landscape architectural academic William A. Mann provided this definition of landscape in his text for tertiary students:

1. *The noun landscape evolved from the Dutch landschap and the German landschaft, meaning a place that is both human-altered or inhabited and surrounded by forest or WILDERNESS. It did not mean natural per se, but a parcel of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features as modified or shaped by processes and agents of human beings.*
2. *A view or PROSPECT of natural inland scenery such as can be taken in at a glance from one point of view; a piece of country scenery. ...*
3. *Landscape also means the type of picture or painting that depicts a rural or countryside view as distinguished from a seascape or portrait. ...*
4. *The use of landscape as a verb, meaning 'to embellish the grounds around a structure by making it part of a continuous and harmonious landscape', is primarily an Americanism, barely used by other English-speaking societies.⁶*

His list of meanings bears the mark of theorists such as J.B. Jackson. Mann's assessment of the use of the word landscape as a verb is a little inaccurate, for it is used as a verb in both England and Australia at least. It is cited in the *OED* with a very early usage (1661) as a verb, coming into common usage from the 1950s. The changes in meaning throughout history provide a deeper understanding of the present situation. The etymology of the word landscape has been explored extensively by authors such as the authoritative J.B. Jackson and more recently by Eugene J. Palka. Jackson provides a substantial review for the early origins of the word.⁷ However, the more recent and current applications are what are of primary interest here. Palka's paper is useful in his detailed description of the changing roles of the term landscape within the context of geography. He says: 'My specific objectives are to establish the historical role of landscape within the discipline, to recall the origin and evolution of the word, to examine controversy arising from contemporary use of landscape in geography, and to prepare a more useful definition of the term.'⁸ Palka also discusses the concept of jargon used by various disciplines to both advantageous and disadvantageous effects. There needs to be added here a distinction between the 'popular' and 'professional' use of term 'landscape'. Palka cites Magali S. Larson, who undertook a sociological

analysis of professionalism: ‘Disciplinary jargon then becomes a double-edged sword. It enhances autonomy, but establishes barriers to communication in the process.’⁹ Perhaps this observation highlights an ongoing problem in the conservation and history of landscapes: that there is a continual miscommunication about meaning, particularly between practitioner and the general public. However, this difference in meanings can also occur within a single discipline as well, as Palka demonstrated. With these comments in mind, it is worth comparing four different academics’ definitions of landscape. All four interpretations were the result of considerable preparatory study and/or experience.

Eugene J. Palka concludes with this reworked definition of landscape: ‘Landscape is the assemblage of human and natural phenomena contained within one’s field of view out-of-doors.’¹⁰ This new definition, he noted, should be used as ‘a clearly identified point of departure’, inferring that it was not the final word or interpretation in the matter. J.B. Jackson concluded that he preferred, ‘to remain loyal to that old fashioned but surprisingly persistent definition of the landscape: A portion of the earth’s surface that can be comprehended at a glance.’¹¹ This definition is within the same area of interpretation of meaning as Palka.

In contrast, architect and theorist, Patrick Nuttgens defined his version of landscape, in his book *The Landscape of Ideas*, which encapsulated many concepts from the physical to the intellectual, overlaid as a complex aggregate within a long timeframe:

*The landscape in its widest sense, the environment, is literally our surroundings. It is the backcloth against which we can measure the importance of our activities and the scale of our personalities. It is everything which we are not. It is the physical setting of our lives, the moral and intellectual climate in which we work out our destinies, the emotional wilderness or tamed landscape of feeling within which we develop the particularity of our experiences. Yet it is of our making; and we are part of the process, shared with our ancestors and our descendants, which modifies our surroundings at every moment in time.*¹²

Nuttgens continued with the contention that ‘this naturally makes the landscape peculiarly difficult to describe and impossible to define’. Lastly, there is the version from another cultural geographer, Edward Relph. His definition is perhaps the most general and closest to non-professional common usage:



This roadside view near Metcalfe in Victoria’s central goldfields region encapsulates the wider view of ‘landscape’ as a natural area modified or shaped by human processes and agents, in this case the infrastructure of mining (roads) and farming (fences).



Left: The Australian landscape presented many novel scenes to early European observers, including the distinctive grass trees of Flinders Island, drawn here by James Backhouse for *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (1843).

*I generally use the word 'landscape' to refer to everything I see and sense when I am out of doors. I happen to think that it is useful to have a word which encompasses environments in terms of the way in which I experience them, and landscape seems entirely suitable.*¹³

Several key themes appear in all four preferred meanings of the term 'landscape', namely: the importance of human perception (especially sight); the out-of-doors; the mixtures of natural and cultural, fabric and system; and change. However, while some common themes emerged in the many meanings applied to the word 'landscape', there is no single, commonly agreed interpretation. Relph concludes, in his historical review chapter, with a now familiar observation: 'there are no simple ways to understand and appreciate landscapes'. Relph provided a summary of the some of the ways landscape can be understood and experienced:

*[Landscape] is in some measure an historical document, a demonstration of social and ecological processes, an expression of authority and of time and money committed, and a comment on the values of the culture of which it is a part. To consider landscape from any of these perspectives is justifiable.*¹⁴

REFERENCES

- 1 Jean C.R. Sim, 'Designed Landscapes in Queensland, 1859–1939: experimentation – adaptation – innovation', Unpublished PhD thesis, Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering, Queensland University of Technology, 1999; also available online at <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/archive/00010835/>
- 2 J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984, p.156.
- 3 Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, p.3.
- 4 J.A. Simpson & E.S.C. Weiner (eds), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, vol. VIII, pp.628–29.
- 5 James Duncan, 'Landscape', in R.J. Johnston et al (eds), *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 3rd ed., Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.316.
- 6 William A. Mann, *Landscape Architecture: an illustrated history in timelines, site plans and biography*, John Wiley, New York, 1993, pp.419–20.
- 7 Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, pp.3–8.
- 8 Eugene J. Palka, 'Coming to grips with the concept of landscape', in *Landscape Journal*, 14 (1), 1995, p.64.
- 9 Palka, 'Coming to grips with the concept of landscape', p.71, and paraphrasing from Magali S. Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: a sociological analysis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977.
- 10 Palka, 'Coming to grips with the concept of landscape', p.71.
- 11 Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, p.8.
- 12 Patrick Nuttgens, *The Landscape of Ideas*, Faber and Faber, London, 1972, p.14.
- 13 Edward Relph, *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography*, Croom Helm, London, 1981, p.22.
- 14 Relph, *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography*, p.62.

Jeannie Sim is a Brisbane-based landscape architect and garden historian. She is currently a senior lecturer in the School of Design, Faculty of Built Environment & Engineering, Queensland University of Technology. Her research interests embrace the history of designed landscapes in Queensland, sub/tropical garden design, and conservation of historic landscapes.

Unconnected thoughts on gardening

Stuart Read

Richard Aitken's keynote address at the 2008 Bowral conference drew to my notice William Shenstone's 'Unconnected thoughts', published posthumously in 1764. Here are a few of my own disparate thoughts—offered in Shenstone's same spirit.

The longer I work in cultural heritage the more convinced I am that many of us have both environmental and historical amnesia: relative ignorance of Australian (or Pacific) history, art, and garden history. 'Shuddup and pour the beer/wine!'

Daily exposure to tree removals, subdivisions, developments focussed on maximum yield, and minimum thought to climate, place, or culture in which they occur, has hardened my views. Of our making links between what we do and what that might mean for our environment, community, place.

I've often thought there are two types of designer: the 'genius' producing a known 'brand'—monotypic—you know what you're paying for and getting. It matters little who you (the client) are or where it is—it is an 'X' design. And those who ask and listen to what you want; who notice where they are working, its climate, culture, 'fit'.

Twelve years of 'liberal' government sharpened my focus on the 'aspirational', and connections between gardens (particularly large ones), power, politics, and property. 'Aspirational' in that few today can afford a garden of scale: time, land, upkeep. To have, and more, to create one, takes dosh—how better to show 'I've arrived'. Little wonder a recent *Australian Financial Review* magazine showed new-rich making large gardens and arboreta nation-wide. One doubts many such regularly get on their knees weeding, digging, mulching.

How 'class-based' (or wanna-be-class) is gardening now? Does the (endangered) backyard filled with lifestyle statements 'say' plenty about us? Was it ever so, when garden histories talk of princely hunting parks in Persia, Iraq, India? Was a walled 'paradise' always something achievable by a certain few? and emulated by more?

And don't we want them 'on the cheap' anyway? Is \$20 an hour too much to pay a 'gardener'? I think we belittle the science and art of

horticulture—we won't pay what it takes to produce such knowledge or skill. A short visit to Wisley in Surrey or the Belvedere in Vienna shows what high standards some place on gardens—at some cost. Here we reach for Woolworths, magazines, and gaze at 'Backyard Blitz' for quick-fix, you-beaut solutions. If I charged \$200 an hour to 'pick my brain' on garden queries, I'd have few friends and even fewer questions. Dream on: it's just a free favour, yes?

I'm interested in the sometimes testy relationship between owners and designers/gardeners: who 'has the ideas' or gives/gets credit. We are very much a 'do-it-yourself' culture with cock-snooking disdain for training, self-education. Owners, patrons can often be dismissive about how creative, influential, and darn-right their designers/gardeners are/were—taking credit once things 'work'. And vice-versa: some arrogant designer/gardeners claim credit for the ideas/work of owners/patrons. This middle ground increasingly fascinates me—it's opaque at best. Rather different from a free convict labour force or cheap live-in gardener, when wages were low and before unions, awards, or TV made life complicated.

Yet garden-making continues: hopeful signs to me are allotment gardens under high-rise flats; community gardens in suburbia and inner cities; and passionate gardeners who the AGHS is full of and many of whom were featured in Neil Robertson's book *The Open Garden* in 2000. Against odds of drought, herbivorous animals, bugs, weather, expense, and effort—on they go! Bravo to their spirit and the obvious oxygen boost gardening is to the soul.

Stuart Read is an opinionated so-and-so from Sydney. He welcomes lively debate on gardens in the spirit of 'wild gardener' William Robinson, an opinionated nineteenth-century horti-writer from Ireland/London/East Sussex.

Australian Newspapers beta

<http://ndpbeta.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

The Australian Newspapers beta website is a project of the Australian Newspapers Digitisation Project and is hosted by the National Library of Australia. It is a cooperative venture between the NLA and the various State and Territory libraries to digitise out-of-copyright newspapers. (The 'beta' of the title simply means that this site is a trial in course of final development.)

The data is provided from digitised copies of newspapers, mostly derived from existing microfilms. The facility for viewing is greatly enhanced compared with microfilm readers, and of course, the data being in digital form it can be easily saved as computer files or printed. Searching is possible via keyword searches, as well as traditional methods of scanning or searching by known dates. The relevant screen displays both the original article and a text version (produced using optical character recognition software).

Access is free to all who have access to the internet, and users are encouraged to log in and interact with the project by correcting the text versions of articles. A search could be made, for instance, for a name, a place, a phrase (bracketing the words with "double inverted commas"), or any other word. It is also possible to tag articles for easy reference, and to use tags provided by other users. Some special interest groups have, for instance, taken on the task of tagging material relevant to its own members' interests (for instance the Light Railway Research Society of Australia—LRRSA).

There are currently over 350,000 pages available and many more are awaiting inclusion. Although coverage at this initial stage is limited, it is the ultimate intention of the project to include all Australian newspapers that are out of copyright. The existing coverage is particularly strong in the early colonial period for New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania); the mid-nineteenth century for Western Australia, Queensland, and the Northern Territory; and the early twentieth century for Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. Coverage commences in 1803 with the *Sydney Gazette*, and concludes in 1945 with the *Canberra Times*.

The service was launched in July 2008 and has met with an outstanding response. It promises to revolutionise the way we research Australian garden history by providing instant access to material that was previously only available by laborious manual searching on microfilms. In addition, it provides the inestimable benefit of full text searching, superseding many earlier attempts at indexing and abstracting. Try it for yourself. If you do not have home access to the internet, join your local public library and log on. You'll find it a very addictive new way to get your garden history fix.

Next issue: Picture Australia

This is the first in a series of articles aimed as assisting readers in researching Australia's garden history using websites.

The first subject—on-line access to historic Australian newspapers—is amongst the most exciting development in many years in terms of bringing easy access to a wealth of previously difficult-to-access historical data.



Profile

Bibliophile and University Librarian at the Barr Smith Library, The University of Adelaide, **Ray Choate** is our most recent National Management Committee member.

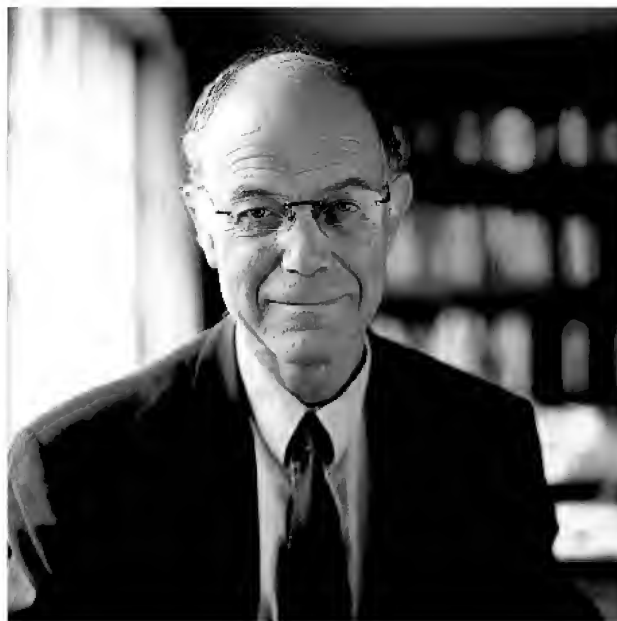
I grew up on a small ranch on the plains and prairies of eastern Wyoming. Part of the ranch was under irrigation from the local creek and, as a result, the ranch was able to maintain a vegetable garden. At an altitude of 5000 feet, and a growing season of around 120 days, gardening was always a challenge. The flower gardens (known locally as 'yards') were less fortunate than vegetable gardens, and the most successful gardens tended to concentrate on indigenous plants, shrubs, and trees.

Following graduation from the local state university, I spent two years studying with a Fulbright Fellowship in West Berlin at the Freie Universitat Berlin, before returning to Columbia University in New York City and obtaining my library qualifications.

After a few years employment in university and educational libraries in New York City, Massachusetts, and the Netherlands, I migrated with my family to Melbourne in 1970, taking up a position as Head of Reference at La Trobe University, eventually taking on the role of Deputy University Librarian. In 1990, I accepted an appointment as University Librarian at the Barr Smith Library at The University of Adelaide, a position I still hold.

The Barr Smith Library is an excellent library with strong collections in gardening and botanical books; its Special Collections section has many treasures in these disciplines, which go well in complementing the landscape architecture courses offered by The University of Adelaide as well as providing a rich resource for researchers of the history of gardens and designed landscapes. The Library encourages users and visitors to read and undertake research in its collections, and is generous in lending its botanical books for serious exhibitions. Resources permitting, the Library adds regularly to its collections of current and antiquarian material.

My interest in gardening includes the bibliographic—I'm an avid collector of books on gardens and gardening, and have a large number of interesting and beautiful gardens available to me vicariously, through reading—a far easier form of gardening than battling the rigours of dry Wyoming and South Australian climates (however, while Wyoming has similarly hot summers to Adelaide, the winters there are a stark contrast with



The University of Adelaide

sub-freezing temperatures being the norm). In addition to gardening, I also collect books in the area of the Dutch decorative arts and Australian decorative arts.

One of my responsibilities at The University of Adelaide is to establish and supervise the University of Adelaide Press, an electronic press publishing scholarly materials by the academic staff at the university. I also established the Barr Smith Press at the University Library in 1996; its first book was the letters of Robert and Joanna Barr Smith, who had a large house and property in Adelaide, Torrens Park, now Scotch College. The Barr Smiths were keen gardeners, and there are many references in their letters to their gardens.

My own publications include *A guide to sources of information on the arts in Australia* and *Illustration index to Australian art: reproductions in art monographs and exhibition catalogues*. A similar index of books and periodicals regarding gardens in Australia is being considered (another excuse for collecting gardening books).

Ray Choate was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2001, and was a recipient in 2003 of an Australian Centenary Medal 'for service to Australian society and the humanities in librarianship'.

Review essay

Brush with Gondwana

Janda Gooding, *Brush with Gondwana: Botanical Artists Group of Western Australia*, Fremantle Press, Fremantle, WA, 2008 (ISBN 978 1 921361 26 5): hardback RRP \$60

In recent years botanical art has become increasingly widely recognised as an art form independent of its origins as scientific illustration. While the delineation between botanical art and botanical illustration remains loose, one strategy can be found in an interrogation of the artist's motive. The mandate that the botanical artist merely copy from life can be rebuked outright by observing the work of a skilled botanical artist; if photorealism was the intention, digital technology would have rendered the artist obsolete long ago. The end result should inspire in the viewer something of the fascination and intrigue which drove the artist to pick up their brush in the first place. In the case of the Botanical Artists Group of Western Australia, the motivations behind its work are varied, yet all members are clearly deeply committed to illustrating artistically and scientifically the uniqueness of Western Australian flora. What becomes clear is that their work constitutes what Professor Stephen D. Hopper, Director of Kew Gardens, terms in his forward a 'natural heritage'. There is scientific-historical as well as cultural-historical memory at play in the productions of these artists.

Janda Gooding's *Brush with Gondwana* offers a survey of the Botanical Artists Group of Western Australia. Affectionately known as the BAGs, the group established itself in 1991 as a means by which a collective of local botanical artists could share advice, support, and resources. The complexities of copyright, contracts, and commissions—which plague many independent artists—are particularly pertinent to the botanical arts, where much of the work is produced for government and state institutions, private organisations, or for publication. As Gooding makes clear, the necessity for artists to be informed and aware of their responsibilities and rights was a key factor contributing to the group's formation. The other notable benefit was the sociability which came from sharing experiences, resources, and knowledge—vital for an art form which demands many solitary hours at the drawing board.

Gooding has divided the volume into richly illustrated chapters through which members are given space to tell the story of their work and their reasoning for working with, within, or through

a botanical natural history tradition. The story begins with the work of artist, historian, and botanist Rica Erickson, a centenarian who has inspired generations to follow. Beginning in the 1930s, her particular fascination has remained with Western Australian orchids and trigger-plants. She continues a tradition of female artists taking amateur pursuits to professional heights. Like Janie Craig and Emily Pelloe before her, Erickson remains devoted to the flora of Western Australia. The prominence of women in the botanical arts throughout history and into the present day remains evidence of the vibrancy of an earlier amateur tradition of botanical art in Australia which has come to professional fruition.

Following in the traditions of Erickson and others are Pat Dundas, Ellen Hickman, Penny Leech, Philippa Nikulinsky, Margaret Pieroni, and Katrina Syme, who join Erickson as the founding members of the Botanical Artists Group of Western Australia. While Pieroni's orchids and the fascinating technicolour fungi revealed by Syme offer evidence of the artists' commitment to the spellbinding intricacies of particular Western Australian species, Leech and Dundas bring other artistic traditions to bear on contemporary botanical art. Leech's background in graphic design and Dundas's references to natural history and still-life traditions in her combination of botanical specimens and found-objects from the Karri Walk Trail, offer suggestive possibilities and particular challenges to the boundaries of what constitutes botanical art today. Hickman and Nikulinsky continue the scientific tradition of documentation of species, which Hickman traces with subtle pencil drawings and dissections. For Nikulinsky, it is the physiognomy of adaptation, survival, and growth in the harsh environs of inland Western Australia.

Brush with Gondwana is a publication which highlights the symbiotic relationship between aesthetics and science in botanical art. It is lavishly illustrated, although with a limited colour palette. Despite this, Gooding's publication is a very valuable document and testimony to the continued vitality of botanical art in Australia.

Amelia Scurry researches within the School of Culture and Communication, The University of Melbourne. Her research interests include literary studies and nineteenth-century natural history illustration.

Recently released

Michel Conan (ed.), *Gardens and Imagination: cultural history and agency*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., 2008 (ISBN 978 0 88402 335 7): paperback RRP \$65

Conan (in his introductory essay ‘Methods and perspectives for the study of gardens and their reception’) and his contributors address from wide cultural and historical viewpoints the ways in which gardens impinge on human imagination. Yinong Xu of the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of New South Wales contributes a chapter analysing imagery and poetics in the garden essays of Wang Shizhen (1526–1590), a distinctive and intellectual figure in Chinese garden history.

Kate Darien-Smith, Richard Gillespie, Caroline Jordan, & Elizabeth Willis (eds), *Seize the Day: exhibitions, Australian and the world*, Monash University ePress, Clayton, Vic., 2008 (ISBN 978 0 9804648 0 1): paperback RRP \$54.95 (also available online from www.epress.monash.edu/sd)

Seize the Day draws together in print and web forms, the papers of a 2006 conference examining exhibitions, Australia, and the world. The exhibitions treated are by no means confined to major intercolonial or international expositions, but include other forms such as bazaars and fetes, art gallery and museum displays, and local displays (such as Melbourne’s Centenary All-Electricity Exhibition of 1935, with its astounding Garden of Light). The book’s two parts—‘Displaying Colonialism’ and ‘Nationalism and Modernity’—are further subdivided to reflect groupings of scholarship. Garden historians in particular will enjoy chapters on Mueller’s forest contributions to exhibitions, explorations of aestheticism and empire, and influences of modernist design.

Jim Endersby, *Imperial Nature: Joseph Hooker and the practices of Victorian science*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008 (ISBN 978 0 2262079 1 9): hardback RRP US\$35

This work is a timely analysis of the contribution made to imperial science by an eminent and well-travelled British botanist and botanic garden director. Son of inaugural director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, William Hooker, and a close friend of Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker maintained strong links with Australia.

He had visited Van Diemen’s Land during the early 1840s and corresponded with several early Australian botanists and natural historians. As a former graduate in history and philosophy of science at the University of New South Wales (and now based at Sussex University) Endersby is especially well equipped to place Hooker’s Australian experience in the wider international context of his life and work.

Christopher Grampp, *From Yard to Garden: the domestication of America’s home grounds*, The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, 2008 (ISBN 978 1 930066 74 8): hardback RRP US\$32.50 (distributed by The University of Chicago Press)

The author, now a landscape architect after studies in political theory, moved from Chicago to Berkeley, California, in 1959 aged just eight—these two contrasting geographies suffuse this attractive publication. The book’s first half comprises a history of American ‘home grounds’, with its front and back yards having many parallels to the Australian suburban garden. The second half has California as its focus and here the Pacific parallels display more similarities than differences. Grampp’s text is well researched and accessibly written—this is no dry academic treatise.

Erik de Jong, Michel Lafaille, & Christian Bertram, *Landschappen van verbeelding: vormgeven aan de Europese traditie van de tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur 1600–2000 / Landscapes of the Imagination: designing the European tradition of garden and landscape architecture 1600–200*, NAI Uitgevers, Rotterdam, 2008 (ISBN 978 90 5662 029 5): paperback RRP €29.50 (www.naipublishers.nl)

This substantial book (160pp) formed the catalogue for an exhibition held at Paleis Het Loo National Museum in Apeldoorn during June–September 2008 and now remains as a lasting record of the exhibits and the ideas they embodied. Such a wide-ranging and representative collection is unlikely to be reassembled for many years. Unlike many similar works, this book takes the garden plan as the central act of imagination in garden making, supplementing beautifully reproduced examples with occasional modern photographs. Extended captions (in Dutch and English) accompany each

plan and these are book-ended by de Jong's introductory essay and a brief but up-to-date bibliography. Le N' tre, Kent, Brown, Repton, Thouin, Lenn , Asplund, Tschumi, Lassus, and many others less well known—it's a real roll call. Highly recommended.

John Kinsella, *Contrary Rhetoric: lectures on landscape and language*, Fremantle Press in association with International Centre for Landscape and Language, Edith Cowan University, North Fremantle, WA, 2008 (ISBN 978 1 9213610 5 0): softback RRP \$29.95

John Kinsella, *Shades of the Sublime & Beautiful*, Fremantle Press, Fremantle, WA, 2008 (ISBN 978 1 9213610 9 8): paperback RRP \$24.95

These two works—the first a series of essays and the second a book of poetry—showcase the writing and ideas of John Kinsella, a founder in 1998 of the International Centre for Landscape and Language at Western Australia's Edith Cowan University. *Contrary Rhetoric* is edited by Kinsella's co-founders, Glen Phillips and Andrew Taylor, with Taylor contributing a useful introduction. Kinsella divides his year between the Western Australian wheatbelt; central Ohio; and the Cambridge fenlands—he is a self-confessed 'international regionalist'. His essays take a wide angle to the landscape; they are local without being parochial, colloquial, and personal. Kinsella's poems distill these qualities; they are edgy, often ironic. Inspiration for this collection is from Edmund Burke's mid-eighteenth century text *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Kinsella finds antipodean resonances doing three-sixties in Avonside mud, contemplating Corrigin's dog cemetery, and in the colours of the wheatbelt. His works are a plea for the land, its survival, and its recognition as nourishment for the soul.

Richard Longstreth (ed.), *Cultural Landscapes: balancing nature and heritage in preservation practice*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008 (ISBN 9780 0 8166 5098 9): RRP hardback US\$75 / paperback US\$25 (www.upress.umn.edu)

Twelve authors examine issues surrounding conservation (in the US read 'preservation') of cultural landscapes, including their interpretation, community and other social values, and the balances between change and continuity, and ecology and history. Of particular interest to Australian readers will be Randall Mason's chapter 'Management for cultural landscape preservation: insights from Australia' which takes Port Arthur as

its major case study. Mason, an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design (whose wider Getty Conservation Institute-funded comparative work embraced Hadrian's Wall in England, Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, and Grosse Ile in Quebec) observes of Australian approaches to conservation: 'Values-based management of heritage sites has been most thoroughly formalized in Australia ... [and] the Burra Charter has become an adaptable model for culturally tailored approaches to site management in other parts of the world'. Elsewhere, Susan Buggey and Nora Mitchell (both with a wealth of national park experience in Canada and the US), further observe that 'Among Western societies, Australia in particular has integrated social values into the assessment of its historic places.'

D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2008 (ISBN 978 0 8122 4025 2): hardback RRP US\$49.95

The bookshelf is overflowing with works on Islamic gardens yet this new work by Ruggles maintains a distinctive approach through its richly layered analytical approach. Diverse aspects of theory and practice are grouped into thematic chapters spanning the seventh to twentieth centuries, with a separate geographically arranged list of gardens and sites (complete with clearly reproduced plans, many corrected or redrawn by the author). A descriptive bibliography provides a useful critical guide to earlier works.

Gordon Smith, *Walter Hill of Brisbane's Botanic Garden*, The author, [Milton, Qld], 2008 (ISBN 978 0 9804415 5 0): softback RRP \$20 (postage included—available from gordon4@iprimus.com.au)

This is an unorthodox yet engaging account of Walter Hill, founding curator of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, from 1859 until his forced retirement in 1881. The author ('former English teacher, business man, and hobby farmer') tells his story through the semi-fictional voice of Hill's great-grandnephew, David Hill Lindsay—detail is supplied from official and family documents, leavened with liberal doses of oral reminiscence. Hill was a significant figure in Australian garden history, especially in plant acclimatisation, and Smith's book incidentally makes out the case for a future, more conventional biography which places Hill's achievements in an Australia-wide historical context.

Dialogue

The Manor House

Francis Walling writes from the White Cedars Cafe in Burra, SA, responding to our note regarding Professor Sadler, Rivenhall, and Charles Holme in *AGH*, 20 (3), p.32. Mention of Holme's estate The Manor House, Upton Grey, Hampshire, brought to mind a visit in September 2002. Never having met me, the owner Rosamund Wallinger and her husband John cheerfully welcomed me with a cup of coffee before they set off for Saturday morning's golf, leaving me to wander at will around the garden. Such is the wonderful camaraderie of fellow gardeners. Rosamund Wallinger has done an amazing amount of research and has painstakingly reconstructed her Gertrude Jekyll garden from the original plans held by The University of California at Berkeley. This labour of love is beautifully told in her book *Gertrude Jekyll's Lost Garden: the restoration of an Edwardian masterpiece* (Garden Art Press, 2000)—this book and her website contain a number of references to Charles Holme. Subsequently (November 2003), Rosamund visited Australia as guest of the AGHS, speaking in both Sydney and Melbourne.

www.gertrudejekyllgarden.co.uk

Claude Aug (ed.), *Petit Larousse Illustré : nouveau dictionnaire encyclopédique*, Librairie Larousse, Paris, 1915, pp.1151, 1491.

les prov. de Victoria, Queensland et Nouvelle-Galles du Sud. Toutes ces colonies, en 1902, se sont fédérées pour fonder un Etat commun, s'administrant librement sous la suzeraineté de l'Angleterre. La cap. est Bombala. V. pr. Melbourne, Sydney, Adélaïde, Ballarat, Perth et Brisbane, N. Océanie.

AUSTRALIE-MÉRIDIONALE. Etat d'Austra-



Lady Townsing of the AGHS West Australian Branch

Sue Monger and Gillian Lilleyman write in memory of Lady Townsing, a founding member of the West Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society, who died recently aged 91 years. A keen gardener with a fondness for camellias, Fran Townsing was an enthusiastic attendee of the Society's functions and contributed to a number of research projects in its formative years. She was a great support and helpmate to her husband, Sir Kenneth, who, as Under Treasurer from 1959–75 and a long serving member of the University of Western Australia Senate and the National Parks Board, was one of Western Australia's most influential public servants. With Sir Kenneth, Fran fostered in her children an appreciation of the countryside that is now exemplified by their daughter Peta in her energetic role as coordinator of the annual Festival of Country Gardens at Bridgetown. Peta says her mother, an inveterate tree planter, believed in trying to improve her surroundings and leave the world a better place.

Lhotsky and Bombala

Readers with long memories may recall that towards the end of our article on John Lhotsky (*AGH* 19 (5), pp.10–14) an arcane reference was made to the 1915 edition of *Petit Larousse*, wherein Bombala—or the French 'Bombela'—was mistaken as the capital of Australia. A long bow was then drawn connecting this with Lhotsky's travels in the Monaro towards this modest

yet putative federal metropolis. The exact volume was not to hand, but now it has reappeared, double stacked on a forgotten shelf of the home library and 'Bombela' has emerged from the gloom to take its place in Australian geographical history. Whilst the Larousse editors might be excused for this error in 1915, the appearance of the same map and information in editions of the 1930s says much about Australia's global reach.

Journal packing

As this twentieth volume of *Australian Garden History* is brought to a conclusion, it is a pleasure to offer our thanks to the hard-working band of AGHS Victorian Branch members who assist with the packing and posting of our journal four times a year. This generous assistance from branch members is greatly appreciated by the National Management Committee, and of course, by our membership generally as they eagerly scan their letterboxes at the start of each quarter.

(Un)Loved Modern Conference 2009

Registration is open now for the 2009 Australia ICOMOS annual conference (Sydney, 7–10 July) addressing the conservation of twentieth-century heritage. In 2008, Australia's most-loved twentieth-century building was entered onto the World Heritage List. Unlike the Sydney Opera House however, many of our significant twentieth-century buildings and places remain unloved. Their supporters are struggling for recognition of the value and significance of modern heritage. The (Un)Loved Modern Conference 2009 will examine developments and trends in identifying, managing, and conserving twentieth-century heritage places, providing opportunities to participate in the current debates about heritage values and places of the last century. There are also some very interesting field sessions and post-conference tours (three within Sydney and one further afield to Canberra) for experiencing the conference themes, first-hand.

www.aicomos.com

Volume 21 (1)

July/August/September 2009

The first number of volume 21 (July/August/September) will be sent out to members at the start of July 2009. The deadline for this issue is 15 May 2009. Contributions of articles, news, and notes are always welcomed by the editors. The issue will contain a focus on Australian flora, and our customary mix of illustrated articles, reviews, and news of branch activities.

Historic gardens of New England: photographic exhibition

Historic Saumarez Homestead will host a photographic exhibition featuring historic country gardens of New England. The National Trust of Australia (NSW) has invited local members of the Australian Garden History Society to present a view of New England—designed, planted, cultivated, and captured on camera over many years. The exhibition opens on Friday, 17 April 2009, and will run until 14 June 2008. During the viewing the homestead will be open on weekends, 10am to 5pm. Special arrangements can be made for large groups. Location: Saumarez Homestead, New England Highway, Armidale, New South Wales. For information about historic Saumarez Homestead and directions visit the National Trust of Australia (NSW) website. Alternatively, contact Bill Oates at the Heritage Centre, University of New England and Regional Archives on (02) 6773 6444 (or woates@une.edu.au).

www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/properties/saumarez/default.asp

Administrative Assistant

The Australian Garden History Society is seeking an Administrative Assistant one day per week for its office at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

The duties of this position include database management, banking, bulk mailings, conference and tour bookings, and general office duties. Applicants should have good communication skills, must be proficient in MS Office applications, and have experience in administration and database management. This position is ideally suited to a person with an interest in garden history, with initiative and efficient work practices.

To be eligible to apply for this position you must have an appropriate Australian or New Zealand work visa.

For a position statement or for further enquires please contact:

- **The Executive Officer**
on 03 9650 5043
or email: info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Expressions of interest including a brief resumé should be addressed in confidence to:

- AGHS National Chair, Colleen Morris
c/- AGHS, Gate Lodge
100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004

Applications close 27 April 2009



Diary dates

APRIL 2009

Pittwater ramble

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 5

A day of bushwalking and 'barely suburbia', encompassing intriguing Scotland Island housing and wallaby-proof 'gardening' next to Ku-Ring-Gai National Park at Dorothea McKellar's former retreat, Tarrangaua. Cost: \$35 members, \$40 non-members + cost of ferry. Meet at 9.15 for a 9.30am start at the Pasadena, next to Church Point ferry wharf, returning at 4.30pm. Numbers are limited so book early with Stuart Read on (02) 9326 9468(ah) or stuart1962@bigpond.com or Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

Harold Boas Gardens

Western Australia

Sunday 5

Phil Palmer, landscape architect and author of the recent conservation management plan for the Gardens, will lead a walk and talk in one of Perth's early public gardens. 2.30pm, Harold Boas Gardens, West Perth. For details contact Sue Monger on (08) 9384 1575 or susanmonger@yahoo.com.au

Launch in English Garden

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Wednesday 8

The Chief Minister has been invited to launch new work on and interpretation of the English Garden, Weston Park, Canberra, undertaken by AGHS members Madeleine Maple and Max Bourke, together with Frank Grossbechler, and with the assistance of grants from the ACT Government. 9.30 am, Weston Park opposite the Yarralumla Nursery (off Banks St) near the Oaks Brasserie. No cost. RSVP to nclarke@grapevine.com.au

'The Golden Journey'

South Australia

Sunday 19

A guided tour of the Art Gallery of South Australia's exhibition 'The Golden Journey: Japanese art from Australian collections', lead by Jennifer Harris and focusing on the depiction of plants in Japanese art. Bookings are essential. Contact Lyn Hillier on (08) 8338 2674

Autumn in the north-east

Victoria

Friday 24–Sunday 26

An all-inclusive coach tour of gardens and landscapes in this historically rich area. John Patrick has kindly agreed to be our guide in Beechworth. Accommodation will be in the former Mayday Hills Hospital Manager's lodges or, for those who prefer their own facilities, double rooms are available in the nearby former Nurses' Home, now an Art Deco hotel. Dinner on Friday evening will be in the lodges, while the dinner on Saturday night will be in the historic Bijoux Theatre. Contact Mary Chapman on Mary.Chapman@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Autumn in New England

Northern New South Wales

April 26–May 2

Tour of historic houses and gardens in the New England region with Sarah and Clive Lucas and local AGHS member Lynne Walker. Departs from and returns to Sydney. For more information and booking forms contact the AGHS office on (03) 9650 5043, 1800 678 446, or info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

MAY 2009

Ellis Rowan

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Wednesday 6

As part of our winter lecture series, presenter Barry Hadlow will speak on Ellis Rowan. 6pm at the National Library of Australia. For more information contact nclarke@grapevine.com.au

Cow Pasture day

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 10

A day in nineteenth-century rural landscapes at Denbigh, Cobbitty, and Varroville in Campbelltown's hills, 11am–4pm. Cost: \$35 members, \$40 non-members. Meet at 10.45am for an 11am start in the car park beside Cowper Cottage, Camden Information Centre, eastern side of Camden Valley Way at Elderslie. Bookings to Stuart Read on (02) 9326 9468(ah) or stuart1962@bigpond.com or Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

The Acacias

South Australia

Sunday 24

Coinciding with History Week, this guided tour will explore the remnant gardens of The Acacias, at Loreto College. Bookings essential. For information and bookings contact Lyn Hillier on (08) 8338 2674

20th century South American gardens

Sydney and Northern NSW

Monday 25

Warwick Forge will speak on the 20th century South American gardens of Juan Grimm in Chile and Roberto Burle Marx in Brazil. 6.30pm for 7–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, NSW National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$25 non members. Bookings to Stuart Read on (02) 9326 9468(ah) or stuart1962@bigpond.com or Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

JUNE 2009

‘Charles Darwin—Gardener’

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Wednesday 3

Continuing our winter lecture series, Max Bourke will present an illustrated lecture on Charles Darwin as gardener/botanist. 6pm at National Library of Australia. This event has been organised in conjunction with Friends of the National Library. For more information contact nclarke@grapevine.com.au

Manly and North Head ramble

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 14

Shelly Cove, Manly, and North Head ramble with Alan Yuille, and inter-war flats, Catholic castles/hospitality schools, ex-Defence sites, harbourside parkland and bush. 1–4pm, meet at cnr. Bower Street and Cliff Street, Manly. Cost: \$15 members, \$20 non-members. Bookings to Stuart Read on (02) 9326 9468(ah) or stuart1962@bigpond.com or Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

‘Homestead landscapes of von Guérard’

Victoria

Tuesday 16

The first in our winter lecture series, titled ‘An embarrassment of riches: the emergence of the homestead landscape in the paintings of Eugène von Guérard’, will be presented by Jeanette Hoorn, Professor of Visual Cultures, The University of Melbourne. 6pm for a 6.30pm start, Mueller Hall, Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: \$15 members, \$20 non-members, \$5 students. Enquiries to Pamela Jellie on (03) 9836 1881

The city landscape and Elsie Cornish

South Australia

Sunday 21

A guided tour (walk and talk) with Louise Bird, exploring the contribution of Elsie Cornish to Adelaide’s city landscape. The tour will encompass gardens such as the Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden and the remaining embankment gardens at The University of Adelaide. Bookings essential. For information and bookings contact Lyn Hillier on (08) 8338 2674

JULY 2009

‘The Italian garden’

Victoria

Thursday 16

Dr Jane Drakard, Senior Lecturer, School of Historical Studies, Monash University, will present the second in our winter lecture series, looking at the impact of non-Italians on well-known Italian gardens in the 20th century. The talk explores historic and contemporary examples including those with dry-garden relevance in an Australian context. 6pm for a 6.30pm start, Mueller Hall, Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: \$15 members, \$20 non-members, \$5 students. Enquiries to Pamela Jellie on (03) 9836 1881

Southlea, the Antarctic garden, and AGM

Tasmania

Saturday 25

Visit to Southlea off the Southern Outlet and AGM. The AGM will be followed by a viewing of and lecture on the Antarctic garden at the Australian Antarctic Division which comprises Tasmanian species with Gondwana connections garden, by Professor Pat Quilty, geologist, palaeontologist, and scientific advisor for the garden. 11 am. BYO lunch, but afternoon tea will be provided. For information and bookings contact Rex Bean: (03) 6260 4418 or rex.bean@bigpond.com

OCTOBER 2009

Annual National Conference, Geelong

Victoria

Friday 16–Sunday 18

The pastoral legacy of Victoria’s Western District plains will be explored in lectures and excursions at the Australian Garden History Society’s 30th Annual National Conference. The Victorian Branch looks forward to welcoming you to Geelong, a city that was once the major exporter of wool to the world. (See also the article on pages 35–36 of this issue.)

‘Cultivating Australia Felix’: AGHS Conference, Geelong, October 2009

Christine Reid

Geelong—Victoria's second city that sprawls around the edge of Corio Bay—is the venue for this year's AGHS annual national conference.

This is the third annual get-together in succession to be held away from a major capital city and, as with the recent Albury and Bowral conferences, the meeting offers an opportunity for all participants to explore a fascinating and historically important region of Australia.

Geelong, less than an hour's drive from Melbourne, has been a lively and bustling city for over a century and a half. From the 1850s it was the disembarkation point for those seeking their fortunes on the Victorian goldfields and from even earlier days, a gateway to the rich pastoral lands to the west.

It is the latter that provides the conference theme, ‘Cultivating Australia Felix’, an exploration of the pastoral legacy, the gardens and homesteads built

in the area opened up to European settlement after the journeys of Major Thomas Mitchell in 1836. In his journals he described the Western District's volcanic plains thus:

the land is open and available in its present state for all the purposes of civilised men. We traversed it in two directions with heavy carts, meeting no other obstruction than the softness of the rich soil and returning over flowery plains and green hills, fanned by the breezes of early spring, I named this region Australia Felix, the better to distinguish it from the parched deserts of the interior country.

The conference programme explores the Australia Felix theme in three diverse but equally fascinating ways—through pictures, words, and site visits.



Photo: Trisha Dixon

Meningoort was painted by Eugene von Guérard in 1861 and today the property still retains its avenue-planted driveway axis, prominent in the painting and a highly unusual feature in the context of nineteenth-century Western District gardens.



Geelong Gallery: purchased through the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation with the generous support of the Victorian Government, the Australian Government, the City of Greater Geelong and numerous community and other donors, 2006

This large oil painting, 'View of Geelong (1856)' by Eugene von Guérard, is a major new acquisition for the Geelong Gallery. Its sweeping canvas—which delegates will have the opportunity to inspect—depicts the bustling port township of Geelong from its western hinterland, looking north to the Yarrangs.

Terence Lane, former senior curator of Australian art at the National Gallery of Victoria, will set the scene through the eyes of colonial artists—from the sublime expansive landscapes of Eugene von Guérard to the smaller, more intimate works of William Tibbits. Curators from two Victorian regional galleries, Danny McGowan (Hamilton) and Tracey Cooper-Lavery (Bendigo), will discuss paintings that highlight the domestic settlement of the Western District. Crucial to understanding the area's landscape is the geology and Dr Bill Birch, senior curator at Museum Victoria will guide us through the many volcanoes and lakes—and on the third day quite literally!

On the second day of the conference, the emphasis turns to the spoken word. Conference goers will have a rare opportunity to hear owners of four significant Western District properties—Janet Gordon from Turkeith, Val Lang from Titanga, Catherine Winter-Cooke from Murndal, and Neil Black from Noorat—talk about their heritage and explain the past and present challenges.

After two days of lectures, as is the usual conference plan, it's 'hit the road' to explore the distinctive volcanic landscape and visit some of the significant properties in the Camperdown area. These include Purumbete which was settled in 1839 by the Manifold brothers—the centre of one of Australia's most successful farming operations in the nineteenth century—and Meningoort with its formal landscape garden and still tended by descendants of the original owners, the McArthur family. Our lunch stop is at Wuorong, originally another Manifold property on a stupendous site overlooking Lake Bullen Merri.

Monday's optional day tour takes participants through three other glorious station homesteads and their gardens: of those, more later.

Where: Geelong Conference Centre, Eastern Park, adjacent to Geelong's historic Botanic Gardens

When: Friday, 16 October, to Sunday, 18 October 2009. Optional day: Monday 19 October



Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.